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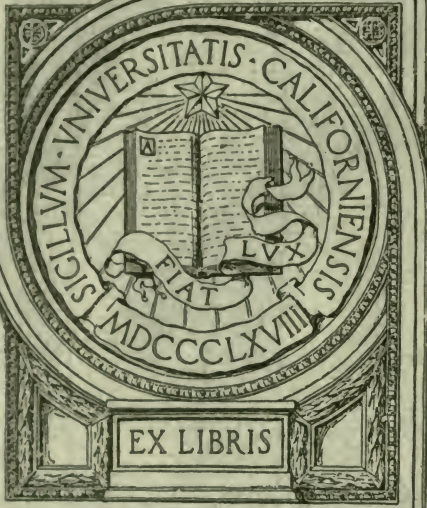

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FRANCE UNDER THE REGENCY

WITH A REVIEW OF THE

ADMINISTRATION OF LOUIS XIV

BY

JAMES BRECK PERKINS
AUTHOR OF "FRANCE UNDER RICHELIEU AND MAZARIN"

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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PREFACE.

THIS book covers the regency of the Duke of Orleans, with a review of the more important phases of the long reign of Louis XIV. I expect hereafter to discuss some other periods of French history during the eighteenth century. The present volume, however, is entirely distinct; the history of the century naturally divides itself into epochs, any one of which can be studied by those who so desire, without any necessary reference to the others.

Historical students now feel bound to consult the most trustworthy authorities. To discover the truth of history, as well as the facts in a court of law, hearsay and secondary evidence can only be received when no better can be found. For almost everything that concerns the government itself, in its administrative and diplomatic relations, official documents and diplomatic correspondence are the most satisfactory sources of information. Many of these, for this period of French history, have been published. Most of the valuable manuscript authorities are found at the National Library at Paris, and especially in the Archives

des Affaires Etrangères. The courtesy of the French government allows students of French history to have access to whatever they care to examine.

The literature of the time and contemporary memoirs furnish the best idea of the social and intellectual condition of the period. The newspapers of this era are of little importance; as we understand the institution of the press, it cannot be said to have existed. It is impossible for any one to read all the documents and printed matter which may contain information. There is, however, little difficulty in deciding what is of the most importance, and on what authorities one can safely rely. The views which may be taken of the events and characters of the regency, and of the administration of Louis XIV., will differ; the lessons to be drawn from these periods will be differently interpreted by different writers. So far as the occurrences themselves are concerned, I do not think that any important sources of information will be discovered which will throw new light upon them.

It is manifestly impracticable to give all the authorities which are examined. A statement as to the purposes of a king or a minister may be based upon the impression produced by reading fifty letters; a statement as to the economical condition of a district may be founded upon as many reports of superintendents and other officials. To refer to them all, still more to cite liberally from them, would make the notes far more voluminous than the text. I have endeavored

to refer always to the most important authorities on which I rely. This is sufficient to serve as a guide to any one who cares to examine critically any passage in the text; for the ordinary reader, long lists of references and numerous citations serve no purpose.

PARIS, *March*, 1892.

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FRANCE UNDER THE REGENCY.

CHAPTER I.

FRANCE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THE history of France in the eighteenth century justly claims the attention of the student of politics, of society, and of literature. The last hundred years have witnessed political and social modifications more important than those of any era since the institution of Christianity and of the Roman Empire. In the intellectual movement of the years preceding, we must seek the origin, the vivifying cause, of the changes which have so rapidly transformed modern civilization, and during those years it is certain that France exercised the greatest influence of any European state.

Few now deny that the French Revolution affected profoundly and permanently forms of government and conditions of society. Even those who are most eloquent in denunciation of its crimes admit that its results have changed the face of Europe. The causes of a movement of such importance can be traced far back, but in a general way it may be said that the conditions which determined its nature and controlled its consequences are to be sought between the death of Louis XIV. and the meeting of the States General. It was impossible that a monarchy like that of the Bourbons, or institutions such as those of the old

régime, should continue indefinitely in France, but it was uncertain how long that form of government could exist, and what would be the beliefs and the influence of the French people when old traditions had passed away. The three quarters of a century which precede 1789, though less dramatic and less lurid than the era of the Revolution, can be studied with equal profit by those who seek to know the record of the past, in order to derive from it lessons for the present, and admonitions for the future.

The reign of Louis XIV. extended over seventy years, and in so long a period it largely modified the institutions and the power of France. Her European position was far more commanding at the close of the seventeenth century than at its beginning. Alike in political power, in the influence exercised by her society, in the attention attracted by her literature, France was confessedly the leading state of Europe. Additions of new territory had increased her strength and her prestige; they had gratified the pride of a people which has always been eager to extend the boundaries and the influence of the fatherland. The aggrandizement of France during the seventeenth century is not to be condemned as the result of a series of piratical excursions. The growth of nations by the absorption of smaller communities, adapted by situation and by race to assimilate with the larger body, has been the law of European progress. Thus France has been built up. Thus Italy has been consolidated in our own days. The greatest subdivision of Europe coincided with the worst condition of the poor, and the lowest phases of general intelligence. The unification of great nations, in the past as in the present, has attended the development of civilization.

The early successes of Louis XIV. were followed by reverses, and his reign ended in disaster. It was shown that the omnipotence of the master was not accompanied by omniscience; a severe rule became irksome when its results were defeat abroad and distress at home. But the feeling of relief that welcomed the death of the old king was far from being a desire for any radical change in the system of government. The child who succeeded to the throne was an object of affection and veneration to the entire nation. When he was dangerously ill, every one was in consternation; his recovery was greeted by demonstrations of delight which were universal and unfeigned. Bourgeoisie united with nobility in a common glee; the fisherwomen of the market were as exuberant in their joy as the courtiers of the Louvre.[1]

The regency of the Duke of Orleans lasted only eight years, but it was not without a considerable effect upon the destinies of the country. It was a break in the political and the religious traditions of the reign of Louis XIV. The new activity imparted to business during this period was an event of equal importance. Nothing is more erroneous than to suppose that constantly increasing misery at last excited revolt against the government and the institutions of the old régime. The Revolution in France at the close of the eighteenth century was possible, not because the condition of the people had grown worse, but because it had become better. The material development of that country, during the fifty years that preceded the con-

[1] Accounts of the demonstrations at the recovery of the young king in 1721 are given in the journals of Barbier and Buvat. The fishwives presented an enormous sturgeon. — *Journal de Marais*, ii. 183.

vocation of the States General, had no parallel in its past history. Neither the weight of taxation, nor the extravagance of the court, nor the bankruptcy of the government, checked an increase in wealth that made France in 1789 seem like a different land from France in 1715. The lot of large classes was still miserable, the burden of taxation upon a large part of the population was still grievous, there were sections where Arthur Young could truly say that he found only poverty and privileges, but the country as a whole was more prosperous than Germany or Spain; it was far more prosperous than it had been under Louis XIV. An enthusiastic observer declared that one seemed to breathe in that fair land the perfume of public felicity.[1]

Such an improvement in material conditions necessitated both social and political changes. In the most disastrous periods of French history, an alteration in the form of government, effected by the community at large, would have been impossible. Hunger and despair might excite a Jacquerie, bands of starving savages might burn the castle of a gentleman and murder his family, but such excesses had no permanent result. The villeins of a feudal lord, ignorant, miserable, mentally inert, were as incapable of attempting important political changes as were the beasts they tended. The bourgeoisie, though more prosperous and more intelligent, bore little resemblance to the same class in the eighteenth century. A revolution like that of 1789 was impossible until the condition of the people, both materially and mentally, was far removed from what it had been in the Hundred Years' War, or even during the era of the Fronde.

[1] *Mémoires du Comte Beugnot.*

Dense ignorance was still widespread in France in the latter part of the eighteenth century, but the intellectual condition of the middle classes had been largely, and that of the lower classes somewhat modified. The proportion of the peasantry capable of mental action more varied than providing for physical needs was larger under Louis XVI. than under Louis XIV. In the cities, and among the middle and upper classes, increased activity and freedom of thought were among the most striking features of the age. The wealthy merchant no longer viewed society as did the bourgeois who kept a little shop on the Pont Neuf under the Valois kings. "The merchants have discarded their former dress," said Voltaire, "politeness has gained the shop." Even this change in manners was symbolical. But while social conditions had altered, political institutions remained unchanged. New wine had been poured in, but the old bottles were still used. Tailles and corvées were no more severe in the eighteenth than in the fifteenth century, but they were more odious. A feudal privilege, which had then been accepted as a part of the law of nature, was now regarded as contrary to nature. The preeminence of birth, which had been freely accorded by the merchant and the member of Parliament of the seventeenth century, was galling to their descendants. The member of the third estate, who felt that in wealth and intelligence he was the equal of a social superior, chafed at distinctions which were the more strenuously insisted upon as they began to be questioned. Thus a demand for social equality, for the abolition of privileges and immunities by which any class profited at the expense of others, was fostered by economical changes. It received an additional

impetus from the writings of theorists, philosophers, and political reformers.

The influence of literature in France during the eighteenth century was important, yet it is possible to overestimate it. The seed of political and social change was sown by the writers of the period, but the soil was already prepared to receive it. The books of Voltaire and Rousseau and the Encyclopædists would have been impossible a century earlier, and if they had then appeared they would have failed of effect. We can more truly say that a subversive literature was the result of the unsettled condition of men's minds, than that public opinion was first unsettled by a subversive literature.

It was only in the latter part of the century that a great influence was exercised by the writers who attacked established institutions. In St. Simon's memoirs, written about 1745, he refers to the imprisonment of Voltaire in the Bastille when he was a young man, and adds, by way of excuse for speaking of so paltry an event, that Voltaire had since become somewhat of a personage in society of a certain kind. This remark expressed the contemptuous feeling of a duke and a peer for any one who was not distinguished by birth, but it would not have been made later. When St. Simon wrote, Voltaire was known as a poet and a wit; it was not until years afterward that he became a power in Europe whom sovereigns feared and the populace worshiped. Had the duke written in 1775, he would probably have denounced Voltaire as an atheist, a criminal, and an object of loathing, but he would not have dismissed him with mild contempt as one who was denied access to the inner mysteries of aristocratic society.

The course of events, the conduct of their rulers, prepared the minds of the French people for political change, and accounted for the influence which literature acquired. The doctrines of philosophers found easy access to the hearts of a people with whom reverence for royalty and a tranquil acceptance of an established government had been succeeded by contempt for the king and hatred for the régime under which they lived.

We can trace this change of sentiment during the reign of Louis XV. The popular affection which encircled his cradle accompanied him when he had grown to be a man. During the long administration of Fleury, the young king was submissive to the wishes of his minister, but after the cardinal's death the people looked forward with expectation to the exercise of the personal authority of their sovereign. His early breaches of morality excited little criticism among his subjects. Henry IV., the most popular, and Louis XIV., the most powerful, of French monarchs, had indulged in the gallantry which was deemed a prerogative of sovereignty, and it had not interfered with the performance of their duties as rulers. "The king's relations with women will develop his genius and his sensibility," wrote one chronicler, and he declared the criticisms upon Mme. de Pompadour to be outrageous. "It is enough that the king is attached to a woman," he said, "to make her an object of respect to all his subjects."[1]

Few events are more noticeable in the history of the age than the extraordinary expressions of grief and affection that were excited by the illness of Louis XV. in 1744. The agitation at Paris was extreme.

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, ii. 154; iv. 367.

Crowds besieged the houses of the ministers to hear the latest bulletins from Metz, where the king was lying ill. The churches were filled with people praying for his recovery. When it was reported that he had received the last sacraments, men wept in the streets. A corresponding outburst of joy greeted his recovery. Statues were erected in his honor. Te Deums were sung. A preacher hailed him as Louis the well beloved, and all the nation adopted the title. "What have I done to be so loved?" the king himself asked. Certainly he had done nothing, but the explanation was correctly given. "Louis XV. is dear to his people, without having done anything for them, because the French are, of all nations, most inclined to love their king." [1]

This affection, the result of centuries of fidelity and zeal for monarchical institutions, and for the sovereigns by whom they were personified, was wholly destroyed by Louis's subsequent career. The vices to which he became addicted were those which arouse feelings not only of reprehension, but of loathing. They excited both aversion and contempt. The administration of the country was as despicable as the character of the sovereign. Under Louis XIV. there had been suffering and there had been disaster, but France had always preserved a commanding position in Europe. Even when vanquished, she had not been humiliated. But now defeat and dishonor were the fate of a people alike powerful and proud. Foreign empires were lost; the influence of France in Europe was impaired, if it was not destroyed. Impotent generals commanded the army, inefficient ministers di-

[1] *Mémoires d'Argenson*, ii. 44.

rected the counsels of the state. It was a government that paralyzed the energies of 25,000,000 people.[1]

For almost twenty years Mme. de Pompadour controlled the destinies of France. The courtesan by whom the land was ruined had none of the heroic qualities of Agnes Sorel, none of the amiable qualities of Gabrielle d'Estrées. Oppressive taxation and constant defeat were the results of a vacillating and impotent tyranny. The low profligacy into which the king had sunk, the nullity of his character, the turpitude of his mistress, the weakness of his administration, the failure of all his plans, went far toward destroying the feelings of loyalty that had so long existed in the hearts of the French people. Some curious figures mark the decline in the estimation in which the king was held. In 1744, six thousand masses were said at Nôtre Dame for the restoration of Louis XV. to health; in 1757, after the attempted assassination by Damiens, there were six hundred; when the king actually lay dying, in 1774, there were only three.[2] The fall from six thousand to three measures the decline in the affection and respect of the French people for their sovereign.

It was with a public whose sentiments had thus altered that the new philosophy found acceptance. "Experience shows that we have had ten bad kings for one good one," wrote a man who had been a minister of state.[3] A few years later, a president of the Parliament presented an address to the king, in which he said that the courts advocated the cause of the peo-

[1] *Mém. d'Augeard*, one of the secretaries of Marie Antoinette.

[2] *Journal de Hardy*, 1774, cited in Aubertin, *L'esprit public au dix-huitième siècle.*

[3] Argenson, vi. 465.

ple, " by whom you reign, and for whom you reign." It was but a step further to declare that the government must be by the people, of the people, and for the people.

The new school of thinkers attacked both church and state, but the church, like the state, was itself the chief cause of its own overthrow. Few chapters of religious history are more lamentable than that of the Gallican church during the century which followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. That measure was the first step on the road which led to the overthrow of the establishment by which it had been demanded. For a time the church could claim men like Bossuet, Fénelon, and Massillon, but they had obtained their nurture in a different era; they died and left no successors. A certain weariness in religious belief can be observed during the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV.; it became more pronounced under his successors. Not often has the cause of religion been so vulnerable to attack, and so lacking in defenders. The spectacle offered by the representatives of Christianity was not one to check the progress of unbelief. It was not only that many who held high ecclesiastical dignities led lives that were a scandal to their profession. Bigotry went hand in hand with immorality. The persecutions of the Huguenots were odious, but they were intermittent; the contest over Jansenism was waged without intermission. The articles of belief so fiercely discussed were metaphysical subtleties, which might have stirred the Eastern church in its early days, but which now seemed without meaning to intelligent men. Religious belief was defined with a narrowness that would have been extreme in the age of Thomas Aquinas. Such tenets could not thrive in

the age of the encyclopædia. The bull Unigenitus, issued by the Pope at the dictation of the Jesuits, condemned many of the dogmas held by their Jansenist opponents. The community made no deep study into the bewildering doctrines of grace and free-will, which were anathematized by the bull. The cause of Jansenism was espoused by the Parliament, and by hundreds of thousands of fair-minded men, because the bigotry and the intolerance of the Jesuits and the higher clergy had become unbearable. The Jansenists were loved for the enemies they had made. "The good city of Paris," said one of its citizens, "is Jansenist from head to foot."[1] The burgesses did not claim to comprehend either efficacious, or coöperative, or preventing grace; they adopted the cause of the persecuted from indignation at the conduct of the persecutors. The Archbishop of Paris directed his clergy to refuse the sacraments to the dying unless they declared their adherence to the doctrines of the Unigenitus. The Parliament protested against these orders and forbade their observance. Half a century was filled with such contests.

While Huguenot preachers were broken on the wheel, and Jansenist professors were refused the sacraments, the morality of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Gallican church was at its lowest ebb. When cardinals and bishops were sensualists, and friars and curates were bigots, the laity became unbelievers.

An institution which had absorbed a large proportion of the wealth of the community and refused to share in the public burdens, among whose official exponents was found scandalous luxury and often scandalous vice, which declared eternal salvation to depend

[1] Barbier, ii. 202, 1731.

upon the acceptance of incomprehensible subtleties, and persecuted with ferocity those who questioned these tenets, could not continue to control men's minds in France of the eighteenth century. It is not too much to say that such was the organization which then represented Christianity. It fell of its own weight; its representatives worked its overthrow. Catholicism exists in France to-day because it is not what it was a hundred and fifty years ago. If one wishes to understand the rapid spread of skepticism in the latter part of the eighteenth century, he has only to study the history of the church during the eighty years that preceded the expulsion of the Jesuits. The loss of religious feeling, said an acute observer in 1753, was not to be attributed to the teachings of philosophers, but to the hatred of the priests; they could hardly show themselves in the streets without being hooted after.[1]

In the church, as in the state, there was great improvement during the years that immediately preceded the Revolution, but public feeling had gone so far that such changes accelerated the catastrophe instead of retarding it. If the Jesuits had lost control of the policy of the church in France half a century earlier, if principles of Christian toleration and self-abnegation had been practiced and preached by the clergy, the attacks of writers like Voltaire would have failed of their effect. But in 1764 the suppression of the Society of Jesus was regarded as a surrender of the outworks by those who were resolved to overthrow the entire organization of the Christian religion. The effect of a measure depends more on when it is done than how it is done.

The contest between the monarchy and the judi-

[1] *Mémoires d'Argenson.*

ciary also helped to prepare men for the doctrines of the Revolution. The measure of political power which the French Parliament had acquired was anomalous; it rested on no sure basis, its capacity for development was limited by the nature of the body. In the fiercest of the conflict between Louis XV. and the courts, their final overthrow was predicted, because they were fanatical, and tyrannical, and stupid.[1] The criticism was just, and the Parliaments passed away with other institutions of the old régime. In the new political organization there was no room for them. But in the absence of any constitutional check on the arbitrary caprice of the king, whatever might answer for a check seemed of value. When there were no representative institutions, a body of men decorous in their character, conservative in their views, independent of the royal authority, appeared to stand for the cause of the people. At a time when the policy of the king was sure to be odious, a body which was in chronic opposition was sure to be popular. When they refused registration of a royal edict, they seemed to be right, because the edicts were almost always wrong. When their members were arrested or exiled, they were extolled as martyrs of public liberty. At last the Parliaments were abolished and new courts established in their stead. At a different era and under a more vigorous government, this measure would probably have succeeded. A system in which judges held their offices by purchase or by inheritance was not one which could have withstood the innovations of a king who was either respected or feared; but in 1771, Louis XV. was neither respected nor feared. The overthrow of a

[1] D'Alembert to Voltaire, 1766.

body which stood in the way of the royal authority appeared to be the downfall of part of the system of which the king was the head. The destruction of the Parliaments produced an effect like the expulsion of the Jesuits. The old organism was beginning to give way. The Parliaments were regarded as almost as ancient and venerable as the monarchy itself. If the one could be destroyed, why not the other? Institutions, whose origin was lost in the obscurity of the past, had seemed like a necessary part of nature. If one such could be done away with, and society continued to exist, why might not others be destroyed without harm? When the Parliaments were abolished, this act of vigor, instead of terrifying the unruly, suggested the possibility of doing without the king.

It was not only the internal development of France that made the eighteenth century a critical era in political and social progress. The conflict between that country and England decided the fate of untold millions in India and America. England has become the great colonial power of the world, and we complacently assume that from the qualities of English-speaking people it was foreordained that such should be her destiny. It is by no means clear that this was a necessary result. A century and a half ago, it seemed possible, and even probable, that India and a great part of America would remain under French control. In Canada, an enterprising colony, though it had suffered from injudicious government, still bade fair to establish the power of the Bourbons over enormous tracts of fertile land which were traversed by hardy pioneers and explorers. The title of the French crown to the valley of the Mississippi was practically uncontested. The sovereignty of France had been asserted over that

great territory; the *fleur de lis* was the only flag that floated within its boundaries. A nominal suzerainty could easily have been transformed into an undisturbed possession.

In India, the genius of such men as La Bourdonnais and Dupleix bade fair to do for the Louis what Clive and Hastings were actually to do for the Georges. Had Pitts instead of Pompadours ruled France in the eighteenth century, had another Richelieu risen to support the efforts of Dupleix and Montcalm, French governors might now administer the affairs of Hindustan, the *fleur de lis* or the tricolor might float at Montreal, the French tongue be the only one heard in Louisiana and Arkansas, and over vast territories west of the Mississippi. Of all the evils which France suffered from misrule, none was more serious than the overthrow of her hopes of colonial development from the Bay of Bengal to the waters of the Great Lakes.

The results of this contest for foreign supremacy were of an importance that can hardly be overestimated. Great portions of the New World were settled and ruled by English instead of French speaking people; the ancient races, the swarming populations of India, were brought under the influence of Teutonic instead of Latin polity and civilization. The position of England was assured as the greatest colonizing power since Rome. In the purposeless continental wars of Louis XV., the blood and the money of the French people were freely expended, with little glory and less gain. The maritime contest with England was one of the conflicts which affected the future development of the world; in the importance of its results, it is not unworthy to be compared with the contests between Persia and Greece, between Carthage and Rome.

It was lost for France, almost by default, through the inefficiency of her rulers.

The French might find some consolation for the loss of foreign possessions in the intellectual empire which they acquired. The authority of the writers whose works so materially affected the beliefs and destinies of their own countrymen was not bounded by the confines of France. No other people, since the overthrow of the Roman Empire, has possessed an intellectual influence equal to that exercised by France at this period. It was in no wise due to the political position which she then held. The power of that country in the latter part of the eighteenth century was far less imposing than it had been under Louis XIV. The states of Europe no longer felt it necessary to combine against the ambition of France. She had ceased to be formidable to her neighbors. At the close of the reign of Louis XV., France was of less importance in European politics than either England or Austria. Though her population was four times as great as that of Prussia, the genius of Frederick had placed his kingdom almost on an equality with its rival.

It was at this era that French writings influenced the thought of every European country, that they were read from the Atlantic to the Volga, that the origin of every important political or social change on the Continent can be traced to principles inculcated by French thinkers. At St. Petersburg and Berlin, French literature was regarded as the only literature; French became the language of letters as well as of diplomacy. It may safely be said that the works of Voltaire were more read in Russia than those of any Russian writer, were more read in Germany than those of any German writer, and were more read in the Low

Countries than those of any Dutch writer. The state of European thought and the condition of European peoples would have been different if Voltaire and Rousseau, Diderot and the Encyclopædists, had never put pen to paper. The theories propagated by the French people have modified the political and social condition of all peoples.

If priority were to be claimed upon the principles by which popular rights and a greater degree of personal freedom have been obtained, it would be awarded to England. The influence of English thought upon the leaders of the philosophical movement in France is as marked as the influence of the philosophical movement upon the rest of Europe. It was a natural result of political events. Rarely has such an object-lesson been given to a great nation. In population and in wealth, England was inferior to France; a smaller amount of money was collected to defray the expenses of her government; a smaller army was employed to maintain her honor. But in that country a reasonable freedom was enjoyed by the individual; the voice of the people was sufficiently potent to obtain for a great statesman the control of the policy of the state; the burden of taxation was imposed with sufficient wisdom and equality to enable the nation to bear it without exhaustion; the cottage of the peasant was not plundered by the tax-gatherer that the castle of the nobleman might be untouched. That nation had ended a great war with glory, had extended her dominion almost from the rising to the setting sun, had acquired a position which she was not to lose. In France, a monarch possessing absolute power used it with absolute folly; his mistress was allowed to put her favorites in charge of the army and of the state, to oppose

Soubise and Bernis to Frederick and Pitt. A war had been undertaken of which the only motive was to punish a sovereign who had said uncivil things of Mme. de Pompadour, and to help a sovereign who had written polite things to her. It had been begun in folly, prosecuted with dishonor, and had ended in disgrace. The two systems were judged by their results. English political principles, English philosophical principles, influenced the views of almost every one of the great French writers during the last half of the century. Clarified, and sometimes rarefied, by the medium through which they passed, they entered into the thought and the literature of Europe.

Another branch of the English-speaking people exercised an important influence upon the destinies of France. Much in the administration of Louis XVI. deserves the sympathy of posterity, but nothing was more admirable than the assistance given to the American colonies, which were struggling for national existence. Jealousy of England was among the incentives which led the French to interfere in behalf of the colonists, but their action was not due to this alone. A sincere sympathy for the principles proclaimed by the Americans gave enthusiasm to an interference suggested by more selfish motives. Had it not been for the aid of France, and of the governments that were enlisted in the cause by her example, it is possible, and perhaps probable, that England would have succeeded in overcoming the resistance of her rebellious subjects. Doubtless, with the resources of the country, and with the growth of population which was inevitable, the United States, sooner or later, would have become independent, but the new nation would have been formed under different auspices, and have had a different history.

The victory which France secured for her allies hastened the end of the old régime. Those who hoped for its indefinite continuance reckoned the American war among the errors by which Louis XVI. involved his dynasty in ruin.[1] "The American Revolution has laid the foundation of another in France, if government does not take care of itself," wrote, in 1788, the most sagacious of foreign observers.[2] The successful formation of a government organized upon the principles of equality and democracy prepared the overthrow of the ancient monarchy. Such was the condition of France in the latter part of the century that alike the wisdom and weakness of man, the virtues and vices of rulers, the debauchery of Louis XV. and the well-meant efforts of Louis XVI., helped to destroy the old régime.

Any long continuance of the system then in force was impossible. Doubtless it might have been modified, and the appearance have remained, though the reality had departed. The difference between such a result and the radical change which the Revolution effected would have been only in name. The essence of the French monarchy, as it had long existed, was that it should be absolute, that it should govern unrestrained by any other authority. This had been the theory proclaimed by the rulers, and this was the nature of the government. "Kings are absolute lords," Louis XIV. had written for the instruction of the dauphin. To substitute for such a system one of which the power should be exercised by the people,

[1] The American war was enumerated at the court of Vienna among the instances of the insane policy of Louis XVI. — *Mém. d'Augeard*, 279, 287.

[2] Arthur Young, September 22, 1788.

and of which the king should be only an ornamental portion, — one which, like the present government of England, should be a republic in everything but name, — would have been as complete a transformation as that which was actually effected. In other words, the monarchy could only exist if shorn of all its power; it could escape annihilation only by being reduced to a state of Nirvana; it must pass away, or become a legal fiction.

It was as unlikely that a voluntary surrender should be made of the aristocratic privileges of the old régime as of the authority of the king. Some of those who enjoyed them praised the views of philosophers who advocated equal rights, but their commendation was due to the fact that such doctrines were viewed as intellectual amusements, and not as practical questions. It is not surprising that the upper classes should have been oblivious of the approach of the Revolution, when we consider the political incapacity which they showed in other respects. "It is a government of narrow minds and narrow intelligences," wrote, in 1758, a man who was himself one of its members. Thirty years later, at the verge of the Revolution, another observer truly said that on the side of the government there were only people with small wit, small ideas, and small devices.[1] The probability of great political changes was long predicted by those who possessed any political foresight. Argenson had written over thirty years before: "All orders are discontented at once, all the material is combustible. An émeute can become a revolt, and a revolt become a revolution, when the people will choose its tribunes and its comitia, and king and ministers will be de-

[1] *Mém. de Bezenval*, ii. 250.

prived of their power to do harm." The possibility of such a revolution was not realized by those who had it in their power to do aught to avert it. "They ate and drank and sat and walked, loitered and smirked and smiled and chatted, with that easy indifference that made one stare at their insipidity," wrote Arthur Young of a party of nobles with whom he supped, when the States General had assembled, and the fate of the old régime was in the balance.[1] They were unconcerned at the great social and political changes that were impending, because they had no comprehension of them. They were children in politics.

The well-meaning king was equally unfit to battle with the events which were to determine his own fate and that of his dynasty. "Yesterday, while it was actually a question whether he should be a doge of Venice or a king of France, the king went a-hunting."[2] Thus the Bourbon dynasty under the old régime prepared for its fate.

The results of the Revolution belong to modern polities. The hopes of a regeneration of the race, of the complete triumph of virtue, of unmixed happiness resulting from untrammeled liberty, which gave enthusiasm to those who preached the doctrines of the Revolution, and victory to the armies who sought to establish them, have not been wholly realized. Yet no one who knows the condition of the French people to-day, and what it was one hundred and fifty years ago, can say that the enormous change for the better is not, in large degree, the fruit of the changes which the Revolution accomplished.

The excesses and the bloodshed which accompanied the overthrow of old institutions still excite with many

[1] *Journal*, 174. [2] *Ib.* 181.

an unmeasured reprobation. They are infinitely to be regretted: honest men and pure women were barbarously murdered; the cause of better government lost ground all over the world from the incapacity and the crimes of those who claimed to be its friends. But there were many years in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when more people died in France from need and misery, resulting from unwise and unjust systems of administration and taxation, than perished by violence during the worst period of the Revolution. The death of a peasant's child, caused by bad government and iniquitous social systems, deserves the consideration of those who study the history of peoples, as much as the unjust execution of a marquis at the behest of Barères and Fouquier Tinvilles.

The follies and tyranny of the Revolution, and the unfortunate oscillations of French political life which have since ensued, are to be attributed, not to the fact that the people changed their form of government, but to the fact that down to that period they had no experience in self-government; they were not due to the overthrow of the old régime, but to the fact that it had continued so long. In a nation accustomed to take part in the regulation of its own affairs, and habituated to principles of political equality, the overthrow of the monarchy would have been followed neither by the massacres of September, nor by the military despotism of Napoleon.

In order to understand the history of France in the eighteenth century, it is well to make some examination of the administration of Louis XIV. to see the system of government which he perfected, and the condition in which he left the country at his death. The results of his rule modified the development of France.

CHAPTER II.

THE EARLY YEARS OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF LOUIS XIV.

1661–1670.

France, at the death of Mazarin, was the most powerful state in Europe. There were many defects in the character of the cardinal who, for eighteen years, had controlled her destinies. He was greedy for money; he was inclined to duplicity and not averse to deceit; he was sometimes timid and often irresolute; he lacked that elevation of purpose, that breadth of view, which the world requires in those whom it recognizes as its great men; but he possessed an intellect of a high order, and in the long list of French kings and statesmen, there are few who have done so much to increase the power of France, and to secure for her that position of paramount influence in Europe which the French people have always desired and often possessed.

Mazarin, in his foreign policy, was indeed the successor of Richelieu, but what Richelieu planned Mazarin accomplished. In 1620, Spain was still regarded as a formidable rival; in 1660, she was in a position of acknowledged inferiority. When Richelieu assumed power, the emperor was able to contend with the king of France on equal terms. Such was not the case when Mazarin died. By the treaty of Westphalia, by the formation of the League of the Rhine,

Germany was rendered incapable of united action, the influence of Austria was diminished, the authority of the empire was still further reduced.

France, on the other hand, had largely increased in territory and in population. The great province of Alsace, Roussillon, and the most of Artois, large parts of Flanders and Lorraine, together with many isolated districts and cities, were added to France by the treaties of Westphalia and of the Pyrenees.[1] While her rivals had become weaker, she had become stronger, and further progress had been made in the slow but steady growth of the kingdom of the French, a growth which had commenced under Hugh Capet, and which, amid many vicissitudes, had continued under his successors for seven hundred years.

The young king who succeeded to the throne in 1643, and whose reign really began in 1661, found himself occupying a commanding position in Europe, and he found the ablest living statesmen already in his employ. The first twenty years of the administration of Louis XIV., though not free from mistakes, constitute a brilliant epoch in French history. The king was successful in his wars, nations prostrated themselves at his feet almost as soon as his armies entered their borders, cities and provinces were added to his domains. Never before had France been so feared, and not until the victories of the Revolution and of the first Napoleon did she again excite equal alarm. Internal prosperity accompanied the early years of this period. The outward display of wealth,

[1] The whole of Alsace was not formally incorporated into the French kingdom by the treaty of Westphalia, but, excepting certain portions which were not ceded, it became practically French territory.

the erection of buildings, imposing though not always beautiful; the organization of institutions of learning and art, industry and commerce, — commendable though not always useful, — did much to create the halo which surrounded the age of Louis XIV., and which still hovers over it, though with a tarnished lustre.

The great ministers of Louis XIV. had been selected and trained by the great cardinal. With the exception of Louvois, no man of extraordinary abilities was ever found in Louis's councils, save those whom he received as a legacy from Mazarin. Lionne, Le Tellier, and Colbert were, with Louvois, the men who took the most active part in the government of France during the early years of the reign. Lionne was perhaps the most adroit diplomatist in Europe. His abilities had been early discovered by Mazarin, and he was given the opportunity of exercising them in the most important and thorny negotiations. He had been sent to Rome, to Madrid, to Germany, and everywhere he had shown the highest order of diplomatic finesse. He had drawn the articles of renunciation for Maria Theresa at the peace of the Pyrenees in such a manner as to give Louis abundant pretext in the future for claiming that he was not bound by them. For ten years after Mazarin's death, he had charge of the complicated relations of Louis XIV. with almost every nation in Europe, and no one could have been more skillful in choosing the fit time for action, in discovering the plans and the errors of other governments, in investing with apparent rectitude the questionable conduct of his own sovereign. Le Tellier had been engaged in public affairs for over twenty years. Though with less talent than Lionne, he was

a man of much sagacity, of great experience, always prudent, willing to conceal himself behind the shadow of his master, the ideal servant for such a king. Colbert was less known. He had as yet held no important office, but it was understood that for some years he had been more closely associated with Mazarin than any other man in France; that he had gained the entire confidence of the cardinal, both in his ability and his integrity; and that the latter had specially recommended him to the favor of the king.

While the ministers did much, yet the young king, who believed that all was his work, was actually an important factor. The character of Louis XIV. was so curious, and in some respects so complex, that it is difficult to decide how much credit he should receive for what was accomplished during his reign. That he was responsible for some of the greatest mistakes ever committed by a French monarch, that he brought disaster to France and untold misery to her people by a colossal vanity, by unbounded ambition, by reckless extravagance, by a narrow-minded and superstitious bigotry, is clear to any one who has studied the period, not from gossipy memoirs or eulogistic histories, but from the sources which tell the actual motives of the governors, and the actual condition of the governed. Yet, while much in his career excites reprobation, and some things in his character arouse contempt, he was far from being a commonplace man. Compared with a timid and irresolute sovereign like his father, or a vulgar debauchee like his successor, Louis XIV. seems a great king; and, whether for good or evil, he left the marks of his policy and of his beliefs on the government, the people, and the traditions of France.

Louis formed the resolve to be his own master, and

to decide upon his own policy, and from that resolve he never consciously swerved. Undoubtedly he was largely influenced by his ministers, and by the discreet suggestions of some of those near to him. If one could advance ideas that should seem to be those of the king, could insinuate his own views as the reflection of what was already in the royal mind, it was not difficult to guide a monarch who, of all things in the world, most disliked to be guided. Still the king's own character and desires had much to do in the decisions that were reached. He could be led in certain directions, but they were those towards which he was by nature inclined.

In the early years of his administration Louis deserves much praise and little blame. He dismissed Fouquet and terminated his career of corruption. He chose Colbert for financial minister, and kept him in that position until his death. For many years the king showed a sincere desire not only to magnify his own name and fame, but also to increase the prosperity and well-being of his people. He sympathized with Colbert in his plans for lightening taxation, for removing financial abuses, for codifying and clarifying the law. He was not a man who could take the initiative in such measures, but he gave them an intelligent approval. It is erroneous to suppose that Louis XIV. was grossly ignorant; that he had been purposely trained to idleness and debauchery, or abandoned to a deplorable neglect. Certainly he was not deeply versed in history, he was destitute of scientific knowledge, he was little addicted to reading, and in all those respects his intellectual condition was that of most of his brother sovereigns. He had been educated in the same manner as the young noblemen who were his

companions, and that was very imperfectly. But he had received what might justly be called a royal training, which was of more importance for a king than knowing when Ptolemies had reigned, or what poets had flourished in past centuries. He was familiar with the relations of France with other countries; he understood the character of the men who held offices; he was acquainted with the intrigues of the court; he knew how to carry himself in his intercourse with others; he had learned to be dignified, courteous, reserved, and to conceal his thoughts and emotions to an extraordinary degree. Mazarin had not concerned himself with his young master's progress in Latin, but he had shown him how peoples could be governed and states increased; the Duke of Villeroy had not insisted that Louis should know his lessons, but he had taught him the bearing and manners that were fit for a king.[1]

Though Louis was fixed in his views, when once formed, he reached his conclusions slowly, and for many years his policy was largely controlled by the men he found about him. Those were the great years of his reign. Unfortunately for him, he was to meet with a success that dazed him. He was told that he

[1] La Porte has left a most sinister account of the manner in which Louis was brought up. St. Simon, *Mém.* xii. 13, has expressed the same idea with his customary vigor, and from these sources most historians have received an exaggerated notion of Louis's ignorance. These writers are to be taken with much allowance. St. Simon's prejudices led him into exaggerations which were strengthened by his genius for dark coloring, and La Porte was a disappointed, discharged, and malevolent servant. Louis was not a well-educated man, but I think I have given a fair statement of the training which he received for the position which he was to fill.

was the greatest of men and of kings, that he was invincible in arms and unequaled in wisdom, until a conviction that such was the case filled a mind naturally inclined to the belief. His great ministers died, and he thought himself equal to educating others who should take their places. His egotism grew, until for him France existed only to subserve his splendor, and he plunged the country into the most disastrous of wars, only that two thrones might be filled with the fruit of his loins. Many years, however, were to pass before the character of Louis was to be fully developed, and before the sinister results of some phases of it were to become apparent.

The cardinal died on March 9, 1661, in the palace of Vincennes. His death had been for some time expected, and, as is usually the case with those who have long held public office, it was generally desired. The public eagerly discussed the probable successor to his power. Le Tellier and Lionne had their advocates, but Fouquet, on account of his financial ability and his great prominence, was regarded as the man most likely to succeed to Mazarin's place. No one suggested the possibility that the young king might take control of his own affairs, and give his personal attention to the government of his kingdom. For nearly forty years Richelieu and Mazarin had successively held the position of prime minister, with almost unlimited power. There was nothing in the early life of Louis XIV., or in his character, so far as it was known, to lead one to suppose that he would change this mode of government. He was a man of twenty-two when Mazarin died, and he had shown no desire to take any active part in political affairs. He was fond of the cardinal, and he had submitted to his control with

childlike docility. Mazarin had chosen a wife for him, had selected his ministers, had decided all questions of war and peace. Louis had been slow in his physical as well as in his intellectual development, but of late he had shown a decided taste for amusement, and all supposed that his time would be wholly occupied with the pleasures that were at the command of one who was young, handsome, robust, and a king.

At seven on the morning of March 10, the chief ministers were summoned to a council. Louis stated to them that thus far he had allowed his affairs to be controlled by the cardinal, but it was now time that he should himself direct them, and they could aid him with their counsels as he should demand.[1] The public were also informed that the king in person was to control the affairs of the state, and to him all must apply who sought for direction or for favor.

The declaration that Louis was to be his own chief minister was differently received by different classes. Among the masses of the people it was regarded as a favorable omen. That mistaken policy and oppressive measures were always the work of ignorant and wicked ministers was a popular belief as well as a political maxim. The axiom that the king could do no wrong was not regarded as a mere legal fiction by the subjects of monarchs two centuries ago. Now that the sovereign was to take charge of his own affairs, his interests and those of his people would be the same, and he would see that all wrongs were made right.

At the court, on the other hand, the announcement of Louis excited amusement rather than enthusiasm. Few believed that he would persevere in his under-

[1] *Mém. de Loménie de Brienne.*

taking. He would soon weary of long conferences and tedious details, and some one else would decide on measures in which the king's part would be confined to signing his name. Such, however, was not to be the case. Louis was endowed with great persistence; he resembled Philip II. of Spain in a strong taste for the details of business; he was a man of methodical habits and of a somewhat stolid character, and for fifty-four years he attended councils with his ministers, and directed even the minutiæ of government with the same regularity that he held his levées and ate his enormous meals. He adopted a routine of life when he was but little over twenty, and he felt no desire to change it when he had reached threescore years and ten.

The death of Mazarin left Fouquet the most prominent of the king's advisers. For six years he had managed the finances as he saw fit.[1] He had found a corrupt system, and he had rendered it more corrupt. He had enabled his friends to become enormously rich at the expense of the state; he had given freely of the public funds to men of rank and influence; he had acquired for himself palaces and estates, where he displayed a splendor worthy of a Roman proconsul. The money with which he indulged in a prodigal extravagance came from the public treasury. The legitimate gains of the office he held were great; he increased them by corrupt practices. He received large amounts from those who made contracts with the state, or who obtained the farm of the

[1] He was appointed with Servien, February 8, 1653. Servien died in 1659, and Fouquet became sole superintendent, but in 1654 he was given control of the receipts and of raising money. — Edict of December 24, 1654, MSS. Bib. Nat.

taxes. Sometimes he was a partner in these operations. Often money was taken in great sums for which no explanation was given, except that it was claimed to be in payment of advances which he had made.

In all this there was nothing very novel. Corruption in public office, though not universal, was common. It was not a thing of recent growth. Robbery or oppression by those in power is the general rule in history. The comparative honesty of officials which is now found in most civilized nations is essentially modern, due partly to better organization and business methods, partly to increased publicity and to a stronger feeling of responsibility to the people for the proper administration of their affairs. Perhaps also the tendency towards a monotonous uniformity which is laid to the charge of modern democracy has had an influence on those who still endeavor to abuse public trust for private gain. The frauds of officials are now on a smaller scale; they are commonplace, they lack the boldness, they fail of the dazzling proportions of corruption such as that of Fouquet.[1]

The superintendent had two most costly tastes, a passion for building and a passion for women.[2] It was at Vaux that he chiefly indulged his taste for building. Three villages were demolished to increase

[1] In a late work, M. Lair has claimed that the ordinarily accepted view of Fouquet's career was unjust, and this position, to some extent, seems to be approved by M. Camille Rousset. M. Lair's defense of Fouquet is learned, ingenious, and agreeable, but not convincing.

[2] Mazarin is said to have told Louis that if Fouquet could get women and building out of his head, he would be capable of great things. The report of this conversation was sent to the superintendent by one of his spies.

the dimensions of his park. The chateau was designed by Levau, the frescoes were by Le Brun, the gardens were arranged by Le Notre in the fashion which delighted contemporaries; painted boats floated on the lake, artificial cascades made music to the ear, jets of water formed rainbows in the sunlight. Over 8,000,000 livres, it was said, were spent on the beauties and splendors of Vaux.[1]

Fouquet lavished money with equal profuseness upon the objects of his affection. One maid of honor demanded and received 50,000 crowns, paid in advance, to become his mistress. She seems to have been of a practical turn of mind, and to have possessed thrift if not virtue. She had long held a written promise of marriage given by a reluctant duke; with such a sum for a dowry, she hoped to induce him to fulfill his engagement. After all, she lost both the duke and the superintendent, and was obliged to seek the religious retreat of a convent.[2] While the money of the public was thus squandered on palaces and prostitutes, a contemporary tells us of the condition of those who paid the taxes. A physician of Blois writes: "For thirty-two years I have seen nothing which approaches the desolation at Blois and in the country about. The famine is so great that the peasants are eating carrion, and as soon as an animal dies they devour it. . . . Though there is a little barley,

[1] Full accounts of Vaux and its beauties can be found in the poems of La Fontaine, as well as in less familiar contemporary literature.

[2] The letters which describe the entire intrigue are in the Bibliothèque Nationale, *Papiers de Fouquet*, t. i., ii., and are most unedifying reading. They are chiefly written by a go-between. The maid of honor is usually called Menneville, but she signed her name de Manneville.

it has not been sold, because no one has any money to pay for it. This district subsists from the sale of wine, but it cannot be sold, nor are there horses to draw it to market, on account of the severity of the taxes."[1] Such was often the condition of a considerable part of the population of France. Sometimes it was extreme misery, at best it was need, hardship, and penury. To a large extent, the splendor of the king and the magnificence of the nobility were ultimately paid for by people whose lot was miserable, and who had neither the possibility nor the hope of bettering it. This is a fact that must not be forgotten in forming our judgment upon the ancient régime, and the Revolution that destroyed it.

Colbert had long been an enemy of Fouquet, and had written Mazarin complaining of the procedure of the superintendent. The cardinal, however, had delayed taking any action, and his death left Fouquet at the height of his prosperity. The young king decided upon his overthrow very soon after Mazarin's death.[2] The corruption of the superintendent was offensive to Louis, and his prodigality and display were equally so. The chateau and the gardens of Vaux were more magnificent than anything which the king then possessed, and this was irritating to a sensitive and jealous vanity.[3] Fouquet undertook to

[1] M. Bellay to Marquis of Sourdis. Abundance of similar letters from other sections can be found in *Correspondance Administrative sous Louis XIV.*, and in MSS. at the Bib. Nat. Bellay closes by asking a remission of one half of the taille.

[2] Louis, in a letter to his mother, says that he had decided upon the arrest by May. — *Œuvres*, v. 53.

[3] Buildings, furniture, silver, and ornaments were for the financiers, Colbert wrote Louis, while the king's buildings were delayed by lack of money, and the royal mansions were unfur-

render a statement to the king, and, relying on his ignorance of financial matters, he falsified it in some respects. The errors might not have been detected by Louis, but they were exposed by Colbert.[1]

Though Fouquet's overthrow was determined, it was postponed, and the king concealed his purpose with that courteous dissimulation of which he was always a master. The superintendent was not without anxiety, but he felt that his position was probably secure. Louis proceeded with great precaution towards the measure upon which he had decided. Only a few years before, the arrest of an influential nobleman had been a serious enterprise for the government. The absolute authority of the sovereign was not yet so unquestioned as it was fifty years later. Fouquet appeared to be so powerful, he had put under obligations so many of influence in the state, that his overthrow seemed a

nished. — Mem. in Colbert's own handwriting, now in the Bib. Nat.

"La mauvaise satisfaction qu'avait sa majesté . . . particulièrement de la dissipation qu'il faisoit dans ses bâtiments." — Le Tellier to Bezons, September 17, 1661, *D. G.*, 169.

[1] It has been frequently asserted that Fouquet endeavored to become the lover of La Vallière, who was then Louis's mistress, and that this increased the royal indignation. Among the MSS. preserved in the Bib. Nat. is what purports to be a copy of a letter sent Fouquet by one of his go-betweens, in which she says she had offered 20,000 pistoles to La Vallière, and had been indignantly repulsed. Many of the letters found in Fouquet's famous *cassette des poulets* were destroyed, and many were fabricated, among those preserved; one has to decide upon their authenticity from internal evidence. I am convinced that the letter in reference to La Vallière was manufactured. It has been accepted by most historians as a proof of Fouquet's presumption and a reason for Louis's indignation; but closer research destroys many of the piquant anecdotes of history. One finds more that is grimy and less that is picturesque.

formidable undertaking. Among his papers, which were seized, was found a plan for resistance by force, in case of his arrest.[1] The result showed that he had mistaken the time and his own position. The Fronde was passed, and of all those whom he had bribed so liberally, not one raised a hand in his behalf.

In the mean time Fouquet continued to give offense by his financial irregularities, and still more by a display of ostentatious magnificence. Fêtes were given at Vaux of a splendor hitherto unknown. In August, 1661, Louis himself and Anne of Austria were there entertained. It was said that six thousand guests were invited to the festivities. Over four hundred plates of massive gold adorned the table. The fountains played; nymphs, satyrs, and dryads disported themselves for the amusement of the spectators.[2] Tedious grandeur such as this was dear to Louis's heart. When palaces were built and parks were laid out for him, they resembled those of Vaux. He loved the monotonous regularity of the walks and the artificial clipping of the trees, sea-gods reciting poems which told of his greatness, and marine monsters spouting his praise. But such splendor displayed by a subject, and a subject who did not owe his wealth to the king's liberality, was offensive. Louis was anxious to have Fouquet arrested in the midst of the festivities; he deferred his purpose, but only for a time.

[1] The text of this project is found in the Bib. Nat., *MSS. de Colbert*. It was drawn up when Fouquet feared that Mazarin would attempt his overthrow, and was in Fouquet's own handwriting.

[2] Full accounts of the festivities at Vaux are found in La Fontaine, and in the memoirs and journals of the time. An inventory of the furniture was made after Fouquet's arrest. — MSS. Bib. Nat., *Portefeuilles de Vallant*, t. iii.

On the 5th of September, the king was at Nantes, where Fouquet and the other ministers had followed him. In the morning the superintendent had a long interview with Louis, who treated him with his usual courteous affability. As he was leaving the chateau he was arrested by D'Artagnan, a lieutenant of the musketeers. The prisoner asked to see the order, lest there should be some error, and then said that he had supposed no one in the kingdom stood better with the king than himself. He was taken to the chateau of Amboise and closely confined.[1] The fallen minister was greeted with contumely by the people, who had indeed little reason to love him. "If he escapes you," they cried to D'Artagnan, "we will hang him with our own hands."[2]

The indignation against Fouquet when he was first arrested was universal. The details of his peculations, his preparations for armed resistance, the scandalous correspondence brought to light between him and his numerous mistresses, excited the censure of all. If he had been promptly brought to trial, he would

[1] The most trustworthy account of Fouquet's arrest is the official report prepared by Foucault, and published in the introduction to vol. ii., *Mém. d'Ormesson*. The *Mémoires de Loménie de Brienne* purport to give a full account of this affair, and contain many dramatic incidents. They have been largely relied upon by historians, but they are inaccurate. Louis's own account, *Œuvres de Louis XIV.*, t. i. 101–104, and a letter written by him to his mother, *Ib.*, t. i. v. 50–54, on the day of the arrest, are the most satisfactory evidence of the views of the king, and the manner in which they were carried out. A paper prepared by Colbert gives the arrangements for the arrest. With his usual attention to detail, he even provided how Fouquet's linen should be sent to him.

[2] *Mém. d'Ormesson*, ii. 99. He was told this by D'Artagnan himself.

undoubtedly have been sentenced to death; but the delays which resulted from the procedure adopted by Louis and Colbert saved his life. Fouquet demanded to be tried by the Parliament. This was denied, and a special commission was appointed, as was usually done in political prosecutions of importance. It would have been easy to select a few items of malversation, and the trial would have been comparatively brief. Instead of that, the indictment covered almost the whole of Fouquet's administration.[1] He sought to meet it by claiming that he was driven to such irregularities, either by the rapacity of Mazarin, or by the necessities of the state. Instead of harming France, he claimed that he had saved her by raising money when no one else could obtain it; if he had acquired great estates, he owed for them, and it was doubtful whether after years of service he had enough money to pay his debts.[2]

A short answer to this was, that every year he had spent millions upon himself, all of which had come, directly or indirectly, from the public treasury. But many things turned popular opinion in his favor. Colbert's measures against the financiers, and his reduction of the public rentes, made the government unpopular among the classes with which the judges were associated. The minister wisely reduced the excessive number of fête days, which were a burden on the industry of the country, and the church cried out against this as an irreligious act. On the other hand, though Fouquet had been presumptuous in his pros-

[1] "Indictment" is not an accurate term for the procedure, but it conveys the idea to English readers.

[2] The defenses of Fouquet have been published, and are exceedingly voluminous.

perity, he now showed both dignity and firmness. He manifested, moreover, an edifying contrition, and translated a psalm to occupy his weary hours.[1] He had at once demanded a confessor, one of special capacity, neither an ignoramus nor a Jansenist, he wrote, because he had long accounts to render to his God.[2] He was transferred to the Bastille during his trial, and it was not till 1664 that he was examined orally before the commission. The Chancellor Seguier presided, and questioned him with the insolence and unfairness which French judges often regard as the proper manner to address one accused of crime. Fouquet answered with spirit and adroitness, and made a favorable impression upon the court.

Both Louis and Colbert brought great pressure on the judges to shorten the trial, and to render the judgment that was desired. It was extraordinary, said Colbert, that the most powerful king of Europe could not bring the trial of one of his own subjects to a close.[3] But the French judges held their places by inheritance or by purchase. They could not be removed, they formed almost a caste in the state, and they were impatient of royal influence. Not until December, 1664, was the sentence of the court pronounced. There could be no question of Fouquet's guilt; the king desired that he should be punished by death, and from that fate Fouquet's friends sought to save him. Nine voted for death, thirteen voted for banishment and confiscation of his estates.[4] Even the

[1] *Mém. d'Ormesson*, ii. 80.

[2] Fouquet to Le Tellier, October, 1661.

[3] Ormesson, ii. 137. The remark was made by Colbert to Ormesson's father. Ormesson himself was one of the recalcitrant judges.

[4] The news of Fouquet's escape was received with delight.

latter punishment might seem sufficiently rigorous, but the king was greatly offended. The judges who voted for mercy were never forgiven, and they sacrificed all hope of advancement. By a curious application of the royal right to exercise clemency, Louis changed the sentence of banishment to imprisonment for life. It would hardly seem a more violent exercise of arbitrary power if he had imposed the penalty of death of his own motion, but even Louis XIV. hesitated to execute a man without a sentence from some sort of judicial tribunal. An act contrary to all rules of law aroused no comment among the French. Even the friends of Fouquet made no protest; no fixed system controlled the arbitrary authority of the sovereign, and no public opinion condemned its excesses. Fouquet was taken to the prison of Pignerol and closely confined. He was allowed abundant facilities for hearing daily mass, and he was allowed little else. Five times a year he might confess himself, but he could see neither his wife nor his friends. Not until fourteen years had passed was he permitted to see his family; and although the rigor of his confinement was slightly diminished, he remained in the prison of Pignerol until his death in 1680.[1]

"Ainsi M. Fouquet, qui avoit esté en horreur, et qui tout Paris eust vu exécuté avec joye incontinent après son procès commencé, est devenu le sujet de la douleur et de la commisération publiques, par la hayne que tout le monde a dans le cœur contre le gouvernement présent." — *Journal d'Ormesson*, December 20, 1664.

[1] The authorities for the latter part of Fouquet's career are abundant. In *Mémoires d'Ormesson*, vol. ii., is a detailed account of the trial, which shows also the changes in public opinion and the sentiments of the judges. Ormesson voted against death, and was punished for his conduct by a petty persecution. *Jour-*

The overthrow of a powerful minister showed that Louis intended to act with energy in the internal affairs of his kingdom. It soon appeared that in his relations with foreign powers he was resolved to conduct matters with a high hand. Questions of precedence had long been deemed of much importance by the various European governments. Ambassadors

nal de Foucault also contains an official report of the trial. A large part of this has been published by M. Chéruel. The letters contained in Fouquet's *cassette* are among the MSS. in the Bib. Nat. Some of them have been published. Fouquet's own version of his career occupies no less than fifteen volumes, published as *Défenses de Fouquet*, edition 1665. *Œuvres de Louis XIV.*, i. 101–104, v. 50–54, give the king's version of the matter. The memoirs of Abbé de Choisy and Mme. de Motteville contain some information. Many documents throwing light on Fouquet's conduct, and Colbert's own letters and memoirs presented to Mazarin and the king, and of the greatest importance, are contained in *Lettres de Colbert*, t. i.

The letters of Mme. de Sévigné, written day by day, give a charming account of Fouquet's examination, and the sentiments of his friends at the closing scenes of the trial. Many valuable letters and documents are published in Chéruel's *Mémoires sur Fouquet*. References to Fouquet's career and overthrow are found in innumerable letters and contemporary memoirs. Some curious letters are published in *Causeries d'un curieux*. Walckenaer, *Mémoires sur Mme. de Sévigné* may profitably be consulted on Fouquet's financial procedure. The fact of Fouquet's death in 1680 has been disputed. An ingenious scholar has claimed that he lived until 1703, and that he was the Man with the Iron Mask. This theory is as plausible as any other that has been advanced on that question, which is not saying much. Fouquet's death in 1680 is proved by more satisfactory evidence than the existence, to say nothing of the identity, of the man with the mask. The documents to show that any man was kept a prisoner, in the manner which has excited so much interest in posterity, are not above suspicion. It is of course possible that there may have been some such caprice of punishment; but if so, there is neither evidence nor any satisfactory theory to show who was the person.

had wrangled as much over their order of going as over the terms of the treaties they signed. Such matters were not likely to be disregarded by a monarch to whom etiquette was dear, and who felt that deference to his person and to those who represented him was almost a law of nature.

The precedence of the representatives of France over those of Spain had long been asserted, and was usually conceded. But though always claimed by the former, it was not acknowledged by the latter. The Baron of Vatteville was in 1661 the Spanish envoy at London, while the Count d'Estrades represented the French. Vatteville resolved to contest the question of precedence, and by arms if necessary. He was sure of the sympathy of the mob in any brawl with the French, and he had the confidence in his success which was justified by the result. Estrades, at the request of Charles II., sought to avoid an encounter, but such measures were not acceptable to his master. He received specific orders to appear at the next public ceremonial, and to seize and hold the first place. Accordingly, at the reception of the ambassador of Sweden, the French gathered some five hundred men, while the Spanish also assembled in strong force. A fight took place in the streets, in which the Spanish had the best of it. The horses drawing the French minister were killed, and also several of his men, while the coach of Vatteville, with fifty drawn swords to guard it, went triumphantly through the city next to the coach of the king. "At which," says Pepys, "it is strange to see how all the city did rejoice. And indeed we do naturally all love the Spanish, and hate the French." [1]

[1] Pepys, *Diary*, vol. i. 223, September 30, 1661. Pepys says

The triumph was short-lived. When the news reached Louis, he was thrown into a violent rage. He proceeded with a vigor that was easy for him, because he was eager for war, and because France was powerful and Spain was weak. The Spanish minister at Paris was at once dismissed. A peremptory demand was made for the punishment of Vatteville, and Philip IV. was informed that Louis would exact proper satisfaction unless his requests were heeded. The situation of the Spanish king was indeed lamentable. He knew, so far as he had intelligence to know anything, that the vast possessions of the Spanish monarchy lay scattered and undefended, ready for the spoiler. He was approaching the end of a life of disaster; he was infirm in body and mind. He yielded everything. Vatteville was recalled and disgraced. The Count of Fuensaldagua was sent to Louis as ambassador extraordinary. In a solemn audience at the Louvre, before the representatives of the foreign powers, he apologized for the past, and announced that his master had ordered his ministers in all courts to abandon any contest for precedence over the representatives of France. Such a victory was dear to the young king. The completeness of the submission and the elaborate ceremonial of the surrender gratified his pride, his vanity, and his fondness for parade.[1]

the French were four to one. Louis, on the other hand, claims that the Spanish had 2,000 supporters to 500 of the French. — *Œuvres*, i. 124, 125.

Pepys visited the French headquarters after the encounter, and says: "They all look like dead men, and not a word among them, but shake their heads."

[1] Dumont, *Corps Diplomatique*, vi. part 2, 403, 404. A full and an accurate account of this entire imbroglio is found in *Œuvres de Louis XIV.*, i. 118–140. He gave his personal at-

The next year gave Louis a still more conspicuous opportunity of asserting his dignity. The Pope Alexander VII. had been on indifferent terms with Mazarin, and for some years the French had no representative at the papal court. In 1662, Louis sent the Duke of Créqui as his ambassador. The French ministers at Rome claimed many privileges; their retainers were apt to be quarrelsome, and they were regarded with small favor by the Roman officials. Both sides were well provided with cutthroats and desperadoes, and it required little to excite a skirmish. In August, 1662, as the result of some brawl, the Corsican guard attacked the palace occupied by the Duke of Créqui. Bullets were fired; several were killed, among them a page of the duchess, and the firing continued for some time.[1] The duke demanded the punishment of the aggressors, but he demanded it in vain, and he withdrew from the city.

The Pope hated the French. He was far removed from France. He hoped that if Louis resorted to violence, other Catholic powers would intervene, and he contented himself with a nominal punishment of some of the offenders. But he miscalculated the man with whom he had to deal. Louis was always a sincere and a bigoted Catholic; but like others of equal sincerity, he allowed his religious zeal to exercise itself where it was most convenient. His piety never deprived him

tention to the matter, and was rigorous in the assertion of his rights. "C'est à nous à former nos résolutions, personne n'osant ni ne pouvant quelquefois nous les inspirer aussi bonnes et aussi royales que nous les trouvons en nous-mêmes," he writes his son in his account of the affair, p. 131.

[1] Letter of Duke of Créqui to king, August 21, 1662: *Affaires Etrangères.*

of a mistress; his veneration for the Pope never restrained him from asserting his own dignity. His wrath was now fierce, and he resolved to teach the successor of St. Peter that he owed deference to the king of France as well as to the king of heaven. The papal nuncio was sent to the frontiers under military guard, and Louis declared that he would enforce satisfaction for his dignity by arms. The monarch who was to revoke the Edict of Nantes narrowly escaped beginning his military career, as did that other great Catholic, Philip II., by a war against the Holy Father. In the spring of 1663, an army of twenty-four thousand men prepared to march to Rome.[1] The Parliament declared Avignon reunited to France. The Sorbonne solemnly condemned the asserted infallibility of the Pope, and any claim of authority on his part over the temporal affairs of kings. While Louis prepared to batter down the gates of Rome, he sought to do it piously. He did not wish to be reproached with sending Huguenots to attack the Holy Father. The superintendent, who had charge of the provisions, was directed to pay special attention to fast days, and to see that on Fridays the soldiers had salt fish and cheese instead of meat.[2] Thus equipped with both temporal and spiritual weapons, in September, 1663, the advance guard crossed the Alps. In the early spring the whole army was to be reunited and to proceed to Rome.

In the mean time Alexander VII. sought for succor, but in vain. Neither the king of Spain nor the Emperor cared to be involved in a war with France in order to save the dignity of a petulant Pope. The

[1] Le Tellier to Superintendent of Aubeville, March 19, 1663.
[2] *D. G.* 182, cited by Rousset.

people looked upon the affair with indifference. The Italian princes were not disposed to defend a potentate whom they hated as a prince and did not reverence as a bishop. When escape was impossible, when it was certain that in a few days the French would be at the gates of Rome, Alexander submitted. He was not treated with the leniency which his predecessor had received from Philip II. Everything was done to exalt the king and to mortify the Pope. The Duke of Créqui was met at the frontier, and solemnly escorted to his palace at Rome. The Corsican guard had already been dismissed, and all Corsicans were now declared forever debarred from the service of the papal government. A pyramid was erected at Rome, on which was inscribed the crime and the punishment of the Corsicans. As a final act of humiliation, Cardinal Chigi, the Pope's nephew, who was believed to have encouraged the assault, was sent to Versailles as papal legate, and there presented to Louis the regrets of his Holiness for this unhappy occurrence, and the assurances of his own respect and devotion. On these conditions only did Alexander obtain forgiveness. Avignon was restored, and the advance of the French was countermanded.[1]

These diplomatic triumphs produced a great moral

[1] The history of the military operations against the Pope can be found in the letters preserved in the Dépôt de la Guerre. They are condensed in Rousset's *Histoire de Louvois*. See, also, for the history of this transaction, *Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs de France*, t. vi. Rome, 98–156; Letters of Louis published in *Œuvres de Louis XIV.*, t. v. pp. 91, 110, 113, 165, etc. The treaty signed by Alexander is found in Dumont's *Corps Diplomatique*, t. vi. part 3, 1–4. An account of the apology tendered by Chigi is found in the *Gazette* for 1664. The terms of the apology were inserted in the treaty, that there might be no

effect in Europe, and France and her king excited alike admiration and fear. Besides these victories, which added to Louis's prestige, he achieved more substantial successes, which increased the territory of France. Dunkirk, situated on the Straits of Dover, was hardly less important than Calais, either as a port for commerce in the hands of the French, or as a centre of operations for a hostile power. Cromwell had obtained Dunkirk for England, as a condition of the help he gave Mazarin against Spain. Its possession gratified English pride, and was of value in case of a war with France. But England was now ruled by an inglorious instead of by an heroic master. Louis wished to secure Dunkirk, and Charles II. was as anxious to sell his cities to the French king as he was to sell himself. The bargain was closed in 1662 at 5,000,000 livres, and for this sum the king sold what the Protector had won. The transaction excited just indignation in England, and just congratulation in France. Dunkirk was at once strongly fortified, and has ever since remained a French city.[1]

Another transaction revealed a different phase of Louis's character. By the treaty of the Pyrenees, he had agreed to give no further assistance to Portugal. Now, as during all his life, he showed that he did not regard himself as bound by treaties. He stated his views with perfect frankness. France and Spain were

evasion. *Histoires des démêlés de la cour de France avec la cour de Rome*, written by Desmarais, a secretary of Créqui, and Chantelauze's *Le Cardinal de Retz et ses Missions*, contain most of the official documents of importance on the history of this imbroglio.

[1] The results of the negotiations as to the purchase of Dunkirk are fairly enough stated in *Œuvres de Louis XIV.*, i. 167–178. The treaty is in Dumont, *Corps Dip.*, vi. part 2, 432.

natural enemies; treaties between them were of necessity temporary: secret infractions were expected on both sides, and a violation of their terms was really no breach of good faith; like the compliments of society, these were required, but not believed.[1] Accordingly he secretly furnished assistance to the Portuguese, and, that they might obtain an ally in England, he took an active part in the negotiations which resulted in the marriage of Charles II. with Catharine of Portugal.

The strength of the government was shown also in the repression of internal disorders. In many of the remote districts of France, violences were frequent, and were committed with impunity. Lawlessness was deemed the proof of gentle birth, of a blood that scorned restraint, and offenders of rank defied the authority of the courts. Special tribunals were now organized, vested with an unlimited authority for the restoration of good order, and they proceeded with a vigor that terrified the unruly. The charges against some of the offenders illustrate the relics of feudal life that still existed in the France of Louis XIV. The Marquis of Canillac, the head of an illustrious family, which had given two Popes to the church, had during a long life led a career of unchecked license in Auvergne. His subjects not only paid the royal taille, but an additional one to Monsieur the Marquis, to Madame his wife, and to each of his children. From the abuse of his judicial authority over his subjects

[1] *Œuvres de Louis XIV.*, i. 63–65: "Distinctions sur la foi des traités." These so-called works of Louis XIV. were not all written by him, but they were prepared under his dictation, and express his views with absolute accuracy. Any doubts as to their authenticity have long been removed.

his chief revenues were obtained, and the peasants paid dearly for remission from imaginary crimes. A dozen ruffians, who acted as his henchmen, were known in all the country as the Twelve Apostles. Their catechism was the sword.[1]

Another nobleman had taken a recalcitrant offender, and for several months kept him confined in a damp closet, where he could neither sit nor stand.[2] Such cases certainly were exceptional, but the authority exercised by the strong over the weak was large, and was correspondingly liable to abuse.

Innumerable relics of the feudal system could still be found in every province of France. Even serfdom was not entirely extinct. The magistrates sent to Auvergne heard the demand of certain serfs of the monks of St. Augustine to be declared free because born of free fathers, but they declined to render a decision. It was not until a century later that serfdom was entirely abolished in France.[3]

[1] *Les Grands Jours d'Auvergne*, 261.

[2] *Ib.*, 224.

[3] *Les Grands Jours d'Auvergne*, by Fléchier, gives a full account of the special court sent into Auvergne. The coming of this body excited such terror among the disorderly nobility that many of them fled, and were condemned by default. The peasantry were correspondingly excited, and in their gross ignorance supposed that lands which they had sold would be restored to them, and the seigneurs would be at their mercy. One of the popular songs written to welcome the Grands Jours may show those curious in such matters the difference between the *patois* then used in that district and the ordinary French : —

Vez Clairmou ou l'y o	A Clermont il y a
Quanquas gens de roba	Quelques gens de robe,
Que font, dins que lio	Qui font dans ce lieu
Moué qu'on ne soulio.	Mieux qu'on n'avait coutume.

Another account of the proceedings of the court is given in

While the power of the government was asserted both at home and abroad, Louis also attracted the attention of the world by a magnificence hitherto unknown, and by a succession of fêtes of unexampled splendor. The *carroussel* of 1662, which has left its name to the court of the Louvre in which it was held, was the first of the gorgeous spectacles by which Louis gratified his love for display, excited the admiration of his contemporaries, and depleted the pockets of his courtiers. Five companies, representing different nations, commanded by the king and by princes of the blood, jousted for the reward of honor or of smiles. The costumes of the riders, and all the accessories of the fête, were costly and magnificent. The device of the sun was selected by Louis for himself. So pompous an emblem gratified the vanity of a king who felt that his relations to his fellows were like those of the sun to the solar system.

The court life of France was never so brilliant as during the early manhood of Louis XIV. Manners were courteous, bearing was dignified, and conversation was entertaining. The gloomy piety of later years had not yet thrown its cloud over the pleasures of life. The moral atmosphere was perhaps little purer than under Louis XV., but there was less grossness. Louis XIV. was not a moral man, but he was not a vulgar man. He had already begun the career of gallantry which he followed without intermission until Mme. de Maintenon led him back to the paths of virtue. His favorite was now Mlle. La Vallière, a young maid of

Journal de Dongois MSS. Other reports on the disorders prevalent in many parts of France are found in *Rapport au Roi sur Tourdine; Ib. sur Poitou; Lettres, etc., de Colbert; Correspondance administrative sous Louis XIV., passim.*

honor, beautiful, but not brilliant, who has gained a somewhat unique reputation as being one of the few women in French history who have felt any shame in being known as the mistress of a king. The monarch also made some efforts at concealment. Louis had not yet reached the condition of imperial indifference when he took pride in displaying his harem to all Europe.

Under the influence of Colbert's reforms, the condition of France was rapidly improving. Louis had a preëminent position abroad, and it would have been possible to have added considerably to the territory of France, and at the same time to have increased her internal wealth. The reign of Louis XIV. might have been one of happiness and prosperity. But the young king was devoured by a desire for war. He thirsted for military glory; possessing the abilities of a Philip II., he had the restless ambition of a Napoleon. No great conqueror has wasted human life, or ruined his own states to gratify a lust for victory, with more unconcern than this king, who did not know enough to fight a battle. The wars of Louis XIV. were soon to begin, and for the most of fifty years they kept Europe in commotion and France in misery.

CHAPTER III.

WARS WITH SPAIN AND HOLLAND.

1667–1679.

THE cause, or at least the pretext, for the early wars of Louis was found in the rights he claimed by virtue of his wife over some of the possessions of Spain. The territories which still acknowledged allegiance to Spain were as scattered and defenseless as they were numerous. The great province of Franche Comté was nominally subject to the Spanish king. It was rich, fertile, and populous. It was adjacent to Burgundy, and could be seized by the French armies, almost without resistance. The Low Countries, which had remained under Spanish control when their sister states obtained their liberty, were a still more tempting prize. They contained many great cities; their skilled artisans were not excelled by those in any other part of Europe; relieved from the incubus of Spanish misrule, they might rival Holland in trade, they might render France as great a commercial as she was a military power. It seemed an easy task for Louis to wrest a large portion of them from the tottering power of Spain; unless checked by a coalition of the European states, he might even hope to annex to France all of the territories which now form the kingdom of Belgium. The claims of Louis upon the Spanish succession constituted the great political question during the whole of his personal administra-

tion. He began to assert his rights immediately after his marriage, and they were not finally settled until shortly before his death.

The Spanish kings had decayed with the empire which they governed. Vigor of body failed, as did vigor of mind, and it was long apparent that the extinction of the direct line of Charles V. was probable. The laws of Spain, unlike those of France, did not exclude women from the throne. Sons were preferred in the succession, but in the failure of a son, the crown passed to a daughter. It was largely by marriages and female succession that Spain had been consolidated into one kingdom, and by virtue of the same law it now became possible that a foreigner might be called to the Spanish throne.

In 1621, Philip IV. became king of Spain. He married a sister of Louis XIII. of France, and had several children, all of whom died young, save one, Maria Theresa, who in 1660 was married to her cousin Louis XIV. Philip's first wife died, and he then married an Austrian princess. By her he had five children, but they all died in infancy except the son, who became Charles II., and a daughter who was married to the Emperor Leopold. Maria Theresa was the only surviving child of Philip's first marriage; her father was old and feeble, and after his death only the life of an infant brother, the sickly child of infirm parents, was between her and the Spanish throne. The possibility that Maria Theresa might become the heiress of this great though enfeebled empire, and that France and Spain might be united under the rule of her posterity, had been considered during the negotiations for the peace of the Pyrenees. In such a case the Spanish felt that their own country would be absorbed by the more powerful monarchy, and to

guard against this evil they had insisted that Maria Theresa should renounce any claim upon the succession to which she might become entitled, and that Louis should join in this renunciation. Only upon these terms would Philip consent that his daughter should become the bride of the French king. Articles were accordingly drawn, by which, with all possible formalities, and with the greatest copiousness of diplomatic verbiage, she renounced, for herself and for her posterity, any claim upon the Spanish throne, or upon any portion of the inheritance which might fall to her. Louis swore upon the cross and the holy Gospels that he would respect and observe this renunciation of his wife. But the contract for her marriage provided also that Maria Theresa should receive as dowry 500,000 crowns, and Lionne had drawn the fourth article as follows: "In consideration of the payment of the said 500,000 crowns, according to the terms above expressed," Maria Theresa waived her rights as a possible heir.[1] The Spanish plenipotentiaries objected to this wording, but Lionne told them that they need only pay the money, and it could do them no harm. The renunciation which Maria The-

[1] Articles 4–6, *Contrat de mariage*, *Traité des Pyrénées*, art. 33. Renunciation signed June 2, 1660, *Corps Dip.*, vi. part 2, 288.

"Que moyennant le payement effectif fait à sa majesté très chrétienne des dits 500,000 écus d'or sol, ou leur juste valeur aux termes qu'il a été ci-devant dit, la dite sérénissime infante se tiendra pour contente et se contentera du susdit dot, sans," etc., etc. — *Négociations relatives à la succession d'Espagne*, t. i. 52. In this great work, M. Mignet has published the most important diplomatic papers of the French government during a period of almost twenty years. — *France under Richelieu and Mazarin*, ii. 318–334.

resa signed, and which Louis swore that he would observe, said nothing about the dowry. It was, however, executed in conformity with the provisions of the original marriage contract, and the two documents might properly be construed together. The Spanish never paid a sou of the 500,000 crowns thus agreed upon for a dowry. It illustrated the apathy and deadly torpor that had settled upon Spain, that a provision so important should have been utterly neglected. But money was always lacking in a kingdom from which industry and intelligence had fled, and where indolence waited for the gold of Western possessions to satisfy its needs. The French were not solicitous for payment; they preferred the pretext which this neglect of payment gave their claims, to a sum of money that was insignificant to a king as powerful as Louis.

While diplomats were drawing protests and renunciations, and Louis was swearing upon the Gospels that they should be observed, neither he nor any of his ministers for one moment entertained the thought of respecting them. Fourteen years before, when Mazarin had first suggested the plan of a marriage between Louis and the Infanta, he had written that France could claim the possessions of Spain in her right, no matter what renunciation was given.[1] During the negotiations for the peace of the Pyrenees, the Spanish minister himself admitted that, should Maria Theresa become heiress to the Spanish crown, he might hope that France would respect the renunciation, but he did not expect it.[2]

[1] Letter of Mazarin to plenipotentiaries at Münster, January 20, 1646.

[2] Mazarin to Le Tellier, August 23, 1659.

In 1661, Maria Theresa gave birth to a son. Her father, Philip IV., was still living, but the French ambassador at Madrid began cautiously to suggest the rights that Louis might assert in behalf of his wife and his child. While claiming that the renunciation was invalid, he endeavored to obtain from Spain a formal rescission of it. If that could be given, Louis offered his aid for the subjugation of Portugal, which was still engaged in its long war for liberation.[1] Philip gave little heed to the counsels of wisdom, but he sought eagerly for those of religion. He now advised with the Inquisitor-General, as well as with doctors learned in the law, and they decided that the renunciation was valid, and must not be abrogated.[2]

In truth, Philip was little inclined to comply with the request of the French minister; he wasted no love upon his son-in-law, whose overbearing conduct constantly outraged him and offended the pride of his subjects. In the mean time Philip's only son lay at death's door. The body of Saint Diego was taken from its resting-place and carried to the chamber of the sick child. He seemed better, and the court and king declared that a miracle had been wrought.[3] But more than dead saints was needed to give vigor to Spain and her sickly princes: six days later the Infante was dead. Shortly afterwards the queen gave birth to another son, but he was so infirm that his death was constantly expected. Feeble and diseased

[1] Letters of Louis to Embrun, January 1 and February 14, 1662.

[2] Dispatch of the Archbishop of Embrun, French ambassador at Madrid, to Louis XIV., May 4, 1662.

[3] Dispatch of the Archbishop of Embrun, October 26, 1661.

as the child was, he was to become Charles II. of Spain, to lead a miserable existence for nearly forty years, and to postpone for a generation the great question of the Spanish Succession.

While Charles lived, Spain appeared to be safe from French aggression on any plea of the rights of Maria Theresa. Even if no renunciation had been given, a daughter could demand nothing so long as there was a son to receive and possess the heritage. Louis now advanced claims of a novel character, which could be enforced immediately on the death of Philip IV. Ingenious jurists were employed to devise theories by which France could assert rights over a large portion of Europe, and one of them unearthed an ancient custom which prevailed in Brabant and in several provinces of the Low Countries. By this, the children of the first marriage succeeded to the paternal inheritance, to the entire exclusion of those of a second union.

Maria Theresa was the only surviving child of Philip's first marriage, and on her father's death, therefore, these provinces, as it was claimed, became hers, to the exclusion of her half-brother. It was easy to reply that this custom was one which prevailed only among private individuals; that it regulated the manner in which the artisan's tools or the merchant's wares should be distributed, and had no application to the supreme authority in the state; that, in the history of all the various houses by which these provinces had been ruled, no trace could be found of a law of succession which was unknown to the politics of Europe. If the French had the worse of the argument, they had much the better of the situation. The Spanish declared that Louis relied on his armies for

reasons and on his cannon for persuasion, and he was content to be thus provided.[1]

In September, 1665, Philip IV. died. His long reign of over forty years had been a series of misfortunes, and the dismemberment of the Spanish empire had gone on apace. "God grant that you may be more fortunate than I," he said, as he lay dying, to the child who was to succeed to the throne. His final wish was not to be fulfilled. The last male heir of Charles V., with a diseased body and an infirm mind, was to have only misery for his lot.

Charles II. was four years old when he became king of Spain. He was still too weak to stand, and it was long before he was able to speak. He had neither teeth nor hair, he could not hold his head erect. His tottering limbs, his expressionless face, his deformed jaw and lolling tongue, gave no hope for future vigor, either mental or physical. The foreign ambassadors were solemnly presented to this infirm representative of royalty. The king was held in his chair by a nurse, while the ministers offered their congratulations.[2]

By Philip's will, he had declared his younger daughter, wife of the Emperor Leopold, the heiress to the throne, should Charles die without issue; he had directed that none of the possessions of Spain should be alienated, and he had appointed his wife, Marie Anne of Austria, as regent.[3] She was a woman of little ability, but obstinate in her preference for the

[1] "Après tout, ce ne sera pas le plus ou le moins d'écritures qui décidera cette affaire," Louis wrote his ambassador in Spain. — King to Embrun, October 20, 1665.

[2] Embrun to Lionne, November 5, 1665; Ib. to Louis, July 17, 1664.

[3] Mignet, *Négociations relatives à la succession d'Espagne*, i. 382–386.

Austrian house to which she belonged. The reins of government, as so often happened when a sovereign was weak in intelligence but zealous in religion, fell into the hands of the priest to whom her spiritual welfare was intrusted. The regent's confessor was a German Jesuit, called Father Nithard. He was soon made Inquisitor-General, and was actually the prime minister. He possessed no natural capacity that might enlarge the contracted views of priestcraft, and his administration was of no service either to God or man.

Louis informed the regent of the claims of his wife upon certain parts of the Low Countries, and asked that these might be surrendered, or due compensation be made. The Spanish were weak in defense, but they were strenuous in refusal. The regent declared that such a proposition was unheard of and flagrantly unjust, and that if it were pressed she should trust in the protection of God to defend the cause of her son.[1] Unfortunately, she took no steps to provide the threatened provinces with any other means of resistance, and Louis proceeded, though with great deliberation, towards the enforcement of his claims.

A war had broken out between England and Holland, and the Dutch demanded aid from France, according to a treaty to that effect. Louis was loath to furnish it, but he did so at last. He desired the friendship of the English king, and he knew that in Charles II. of England he could purchase a valuable ally at a reasonable price. Though the two nations were at war, Charles wrote his sister, after a naval battle, where the English with little reason claimed a victory: "This great success does not at all change my inclinations

[1] Queen of Spain to Marquis de la Fuente, September 19, 1665.

towards France, which you may assure the king my brother from me, and that it shall be his fault if we are not very good friends."[1] Louis used every effort to restore peace between the belligerents, and early in 1667 he obtained from Charles a promise that for a year he would make no alliance contrary to the interests of France.[2] Louis was thus assured that England would not interfere if he should invade the Low Countries. In the mean time, with the sagacity that characterized all their diplomatic relations while Lionne had charge of them, the French had still further isolated Spain and Flanders from aid from any quarter. A treaty was made with Portugal. By the League of the Rhine, and by the liberal expenditure of money in buying both princes and ministers, to which the diplomatic successes of the French at this period were largely due, Louis long exercised over a large part of Germany a greater influence than the Emperor.[3] The princes whose dominions were near the Rhine agreed that they would not allow Austria to send troops through their territories to assist the Spanish in Flanders.[4]

Louis's army was now in readiness, and he was safe from interference. In May, 1667, a lengthy manifesto was published, in which the rights claimed by the French king were stated to the world.[5] The renunciation originally signed by Maria Theresa was void, it was alleged, because neither the laws of God nor

[1] Charles II. to Henrietta of England, June 8, 1666.

[2] Ib. to Queen Mother, April, 1667.

[3] "The German princes hold that the German faith is due to him who pays for it," writes Villeneuve to Colbert, May, 1664.

[4] These treaties are found in Mignet, *Négociations*, etc., ii. 23–40.

[5] *Traité des droits de la Reine*, in 318 pages.

man allowed parents to abandon their children's rights, and it would be monstrous to suppose that a young princess, ignorant of such matters, and living under the authority of her father, could deprive her children of the great possessions that might be theirs. Furthermore, the dowry, the 500,000 crowns, which by the terms of the treaty were the consideration for this unrighteous sacrifice, had never been paid, and therefore the instrument had become null and void. It was for this reason that neither Louis nor Maria Theresa had ratified it in France after their marriage, though this was necessary to give it any validity, and the Spanish, knowing the weakness of their position, had never presumed to ask for such a ratification.[1] As the renunciation was of no force, the customs of Brabant and the other provinces were then set forth, by which the French queen was entitled to those territories, to the exclusion of her brother by the second marriage. It was not, therefore, said the manifesto, in hostility to Spain that Louis was now to enter the Low Countries. He sought no war, he had no desire to acquire glory by feats of arms; but as a just and pious king he took possession in behalf of his wife and of his son of the inheritance which was theirs, that their subjects might live in peace and happiness under their lawful sovereigns.[2]

A few days after this pronunciamento, Louis with an army of 50,000 men, commanded by Turenne, entered the Spanish Low Countries. They were practically undefended; 20,000 troops, poorly armed and supplied, could offer little resistance to the French army, under the command of the ablest soldier in

[1] *Traité des droits de la Reine*, 73.
[2] *Ib.*, 1–4.

Europe. Charleroi, Oudenarde, Lille, and other cities were captured after brief sieges. The operations hardly deserved the name of a war. Louis brought his wife, his mistress, and his courtiers to be the witnesses of his glory. Magnificent equipages, horses gorgeously caparisoned, courtiers brilliant in laces and gold trimmings, ladies arrayed in the latest fashions of Paris, visited the captured cities. The splendor of Solomon and the grandeur of the king of Persia, wrote an eyewitness, could not be compared with the pomp that surrounded Louis XIV.[1] The king indulged himself in what was long his strongest passion, — the tranquil siege of cities that were sure to surrender, where there was no chance of failure and no risk of harm, and where his mistresses and his courtiers could be in constant attendance to tell him how great a soldier he was.

By September military operations ceased, and the king returned to the court. As in most campaigns at this period, the season of activity was short, and the results were proportionally meagre. The insufficiency of supplies, the lack of effective organization, and the bad condition of the roads, to some extent made this unavoidable. As a result, wars dragged along through years, and were brought to a close more from exhaustion than from decisive victories. It was not until after 1789 that the system of warfare as well as of society was revolutionized.

The invasion of the Low Countries excited widespread alarm among the Dutch. The conquest of those provinces would bring France to their doors, and the French, under an ambitious king, were far more formidable neighbors than the Spaniards. Peace had

[1] *Mémoires de Coligny.*

been made between England and Holland, and the Dutch now began their long agitation for a barrier between them and France. For almost a century an alliance between Holland and France had been among the political maxims of both countries. The Dutch had been aided in their contest with Spain by the French. France could justly claim that she had given succor in the hour of need to an infant community which had now become a great and a free state, as later she was to render still more valuable assistance to American colonists in their war for independence. The interests of both France and Holland had largely been the same; both had been united against the dangerous power of Spain. This condition of affairs had now changed. Spain was no longer formidable, while the borders of France were constantly approaching more closely to Holland. Commercial complications, also, had soured the good-will of the Dutch. By the tariff of 1667, Colbert had interfered seriously with the trade between the two countries. Cherishing the delusive belief that the way to increase the wealth of France was to diminish that of her neighbors, he was rendering her commercially odious, as Louvois was to make her odious politically.

The Dutch now wished Louis to declare what accessions would satisfy the rights which he asserted. The demands made by the king, considering his success and the helpless condition of Spain, were moderate. He agreed to forego all his claims, if the Spanish would cede the territory which was actually in possession of his armies, or he would accept Franche Comté in exchange. With some modifications, the Dutch

were content with these terms.[1] Some years before, De Witt had sought to reach a settlement of the impending question of the Spanish Low Countries, and had proposed that certain portions should be annexed to France and Holland, and of the residue a republic should be formed, which should be guaranteed against invasion by these powers. Such has very nearly been the final lot of these provinces, after an infinite amount of war and bloodshed. To this arrangement Louis was willing to accede, but the merchants of Amsterdam feared that such a project might again open Antwerp to foreign commerce, and enable her to share in trade of which they wished the monopoly, and the negotiations ended in smoke.[2]

The proposal that was now made needed only Spain's approval to bring the war to a close, but the Spanish were always unwilling to recognize the actual condition of affairs. Though they could do nothing to resist the French, they still hoped that aid might come from some quarter. Louis therefore continued his preparations for renewed hostilities in the spring.

In January, 1668, under the guidance of Sir William Temple, the famous Triple Alliance was formed, by which England, Holland, and Sweden agreed upon a settlement of the present war, which was to be en-

[1] *Négociations relatives à la succession d'Espagne*, t. i. part 2, sec. 1 ; t. ii., part 4, sec. 1 ; *Lettres et Négociations d'Estrades*. Some cities were to be added to the cession of Franche Comté, had the Spanish elected to avail themselves of this alternative.

[2] *Correspondance de Hollande*, 67, 70 ; *Lettres d'Estrades*, t. ii. ; Estrades to Louis, March 30, April 12, May 31, June 15, August 9, October 11, 1663 ; Louis to Estrades, April 6, June 15, July 13, September 21, 1669, etc. ; *Négociations relatives à la succession d'Espagne*, i. 185–290. These negotiations extended over more than a year.

forced by arms if necessary. The Triple Alliance has been loudly vaunted as having checked the unrighteous ambition of Louis XIV. and saved Europe from untold ills. Sir William Temple on this occasion, as all during life, gained a reputation for much greater wisdom than he possessed. The acquisitions, with which the treaty of the Triple Alliance said Louis must be content, were those which he had already offered to accept.[1] The only result of the alliance was that the Spanish lost all hope of obtaining aid, and consented to abandon what they could not regain. In the spring of 1668, the representatives of England and Holland met at St. Germain, and there agreed with Louis that, unless the Spanish forthwith surrendered the territory in question, they would join arms with him and compel its cession.[2] The pressure thus brought to bear overcame even Spanish apathy, and in May the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed. Perhaps from a desire to spite the Dutch, who had failed to come to their assistance, the Spanish ceded to France the territory occupied by her armies, instead of exercising the option by which they could abandon Franche Comté and preserve the Low Countries intact.[3]

The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was unsatisfactory to most of Louis's advisers, and throughout these negotiations he certainly showed great moderation in his demands. The French armies had already taken possession of Franche Comté. Louis had 100,000 soldiers ready for another campaign. Neither Spain nor the

[1] This is what Charles II. said in a letter he wrote Louis apologizing for having joined the Triple Alliance. — Charles to Louis, February 3, 1668.

[2] Mignet, *Treaty of St. Germain*, ii. 626, 630.

[3] *Letters of Sir William Temple*, i. 330–333 ; *Lettres d'Estrades*, t. v.

Triple Alliance could have prevented the conquest of the whole of the Low Countries, if the war had been continued with vigor. Louis decided, however, to abide by the terms he had originally offered, and upon that basis the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was made. It added to France but a small section of the Spanish Low Countries.[1]

In the mean time a treaty had been executed between France and Austria which might well have changed the face of Europe. By it, those countries decided upon the distribution to be made of the Spanish empire in the event of Charles dying without issue. Thirty years before what is known as the first partition treaty, Louis and the Emperor agreed upon a division, which would have been carried into effect had Charles died within a few years, as there was every reason to expect. It would have added so greatly to the power of France, and to her capacity for industrial and commercial development, that Louis XIV. might well have claimed the lasting gratitude of all patriotic Frenchmen. To the Emperor was conceded the succession of the Spanish throne, with the most of its foreign dependencies. Nominally this was much, but really it would have proved as unimportant for the interests of Austria as the actual rule of the Bourbons in Spain was to France. In return for this, Franche Comté, the whole of the present kingdom of Belgium, and a large amount of territory in the North of Spain would have been annexed to France, and

[1] The treaty is found in Dumont, *Corps Dip.*, and the negotiations in reference to it in *Négociations sur la succession d'Espagne*, t. ii. 482–647 ; *Letters of Sir William Temple*, vol. i ; *Négociations d'Estrades*, t. v., and vi. 1667–68 ; *Lettres, etc., entre Dewitt et les Ambassadeurs*, t. iv. ; *Œuvres de Louis XIV.*, ii. 360–372.

would to-day have contained a population of over 6,000,000 intelligent, industrious, and prosperous French people.[1] Unfortunately for that country, it was more than thirty years before Charles died, and then her interests were sacrificed to make a king of Louis's grandson.

Thus far in his career the policy of Louis XIV. had been marked by a just regard for the welfare of his kingdom; nor is it open to the reproach so often uttered, that it consisted in the unscrupulous plunder of defenseless provinces. The extension of the French boundaries overthrew no prosperous communities, it violated no rights which could be regarded as sacred. In our own day, Alsace and Lorraine have been taken from France without a protest from any one except those affected. Yet their inhabitants were contented members of a nation to which they had long belonged; they spoke the same tongue, they enjoyed the same prosperity; to wrest them away was as violent a measure as if Normandy or Touraine had been cut out of the country of which they form a part. Far different was the situation of the territories which, during the seventeenth century, were annexed to France. The most of them were nominally under the rule of the Spanish, but to that people they

[1] This treaty and the steps that led to it are found in *Négogociations relatives à la succession d'Espagne*, t. ii. 323–482. By its terms, Naples, Sicily, and the Philippine Islands were also to be added to France. The possessions in Italy would have been a source of weakness rather than of strength. The correspondence in reference to this treaty illustrates the superiority of French diplomacy at this period. It shows also how, when other arguments did not suffice, Louis reached his ends by bribing the representatives of every government, no matter how exalted their rank.

were bound by no ties of kith or kin; they did not speak the Spanish tongue; neither in customs, nor industries, nor manners, had they anything in common with Spain. Accidents of birth or of conquest had rendered them subject to the kings who filled the Spanish throne. They were bound together in discordant and unfruitful union; they were subjected to the worst of governments, the unintelligent rule of strangers. Their industries were harassed, their trade was checked; they were ground down by the impositions of greedy governors; they were exposed to the evils of apathetic inefficiency. The rule of Spain in her provinces combined the abuses of tyranny and the confusion of anarchy.

Nor was the condition of Lorraine and Alsace any better. The rule of the dukes of Lorraine hardly deserved the name of a government. The people of that unhappy province were oppressed in time of peace, and defenseless in time of war.[1] The varied and complicated rights which extended over Alsace furnished its inhabitants neither the pride which may be felt in a great state, nor the peace and tranquillity which can sometimes be found in a small one. In many of the neighboring districts, French was the ordinary speech of the people. In France they could find their best markets, with her people they would naturally assimilate. The government of that country was still very defective; the condition of large portions of her inhabitants was still very miserable, but it was much better than that of most of her

[1] The reunion of Lorraine to France was not completed until the eighteenth century. During a considerable part of the seventeenth century it was, however, to a greater or less degree in the possession of France.

neighbors. It may safely be said that incorporation with France increased the prosperity, the happiness, and the future development of every town, city, or province that was added to her boundaries during the seventeenth century.

Unfortunately, Louis's attention was now diverted from territorial aggrandizement, for which some justification could be pleaded, to the indulgence of a petty spite and to avenging a mortified vanity. The Triple Alliance had been excessively disagreeable to his pride. It was not the substance of the treaty to which he objected, wrote his minister, but the form of it was distasteful.[1] It was upon Holland that his wrath was especially directed. He had assisted the States General in their war with England. He had agreed with them on the acquisitions with which he would be satisfied.[2] He had dealt with them, as he felt, magnanimously, and in return for this, forgetting both gratitude and good manners, they had induced England and Sweden to join in an offensive alliance. They had presumed to dictate terms to him. A little republic had seen fit to interfere with a great king. Their ambassador had been insolent during the negotiations. It was charged that a medal had been struck in Holland representing Joshua bidding the sun to stand still, and symbolizing the Dutch minister checking the progress of the king, who had chosen the sun for his device.[3] "The origin of the

[1] Lionne to Estrades, February 3, 1668 : *Letters of Temple*, i. 148.

[2] Louis to Estrades, October 14, 1667.

[3] M. Van Beuninghen, the offending minister, denied that any such medal was ever struck. — Pomponne to Louis XIV., March 2, 1669.

present war," wrote Louis in 1674, "may be charged to the ingratitude and the insupportable vanity of the Hollanders."[1] His courtiers declared that it was not for merchants to be dictating the policy of kings; they should confine themselves to their shops and their bills of lading. The Dutch were in Louis's eyes all that was most odious: they were republicans, they were Protestants, and they were insolent. Before the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed, he had resolved that he would chastise them, and that they should be compelled to submit to ignominious terms.[2] Indeed, both Louis and his ministers, and Charles II. as well, contemplated the entire destruction of the republic, leaving perhaps some mutilated portions of it under the rule of Charles's nephew, William of Orange.[3] During four years, the preparations for this wicked undertaking were carried on with the greatest ability and foresight. Then the storm burst, and it seemed that the ruin of Holland was inevitable. Fortunately, Louis and Louvois were so blinded by success and by arrogance that they lost their opportunity. After six years of war, the Republic emerged unscathed from the greatest peril that had threatened it since the armies of Alva lay encamped before the walls of Haarlem.

The first step of the French was to draw England

[1] *Mém. de Louis XIV. sur le campagne de* 1672, MSS. Dépôt de la Guerre, published by Rousset.

[2] *Mémoire* cited above, and all the diplomatic correspondence of this period.

[3] Substantially this statement of their purpose is found in innumerable letters and instructions. *Négociations d'Estrades*, i. 394; *Projet d'un traité*, December 18, 1669; *Mém. de Louvois à Conde*, November 1, 1671, "d'abaisser les Hollandois et de les anéantir, s'il était possible."

from the Triple Alliance. This was not a difficult task. Most unwillingly had Charles found himself in a position of hostility to the French. Louis XIV. was to Charles II. the embodiment of earthly greatness and human felicity; he had much money and many mistresses, and he was not bothered with a Parliament. On the other hand, the English king had no sympathy with the Dutch. They had not befriended him when he was a wanderer; they encouraged industry and respected virtue. Charles told the French minister that he wished to treat with Louis as one gentleman with another, and on this basis of easy courtesy he proceeded to sell himself and his people.[1] He gladly consented to annul the Triple Alliance, and to unite England with France for the destruction of a Protestant republic.[2] But Charles was timid, and fickle, and greedy, and it was long before he would actually sign a satisfactory agreement. Though he cared little for religion, he had a taste for consulting signs and soothsayers. Louis, therefore, sent over an abbé, who had a great reputation in astrology, in the hope that, if his ally was indifferent to the opinion of his people, he might incline to the judgment of the stars. Unluckily, the astrologer attempted that most perilous form of prophecy, foretelling the result of a horse race. The king's son, the Duke of Monmouth, laid great sums on the horses that were designated by the abbé's horoscope, and lost all that he wagered.

[1] Ruvigny to Louis, May 21, 1668.

[2] "Et d'autant que la dissolution du gouvernment des Etats Généraux, qui est la fin principale qu'on se propose dans cette guerre," etc. — Form of treaty proposed by Charles, *Corres. d'Angleterre*, 85.

The unfortunate prophet was hastily ordered back to France.[1]

Other negotiators were more successful, and in 1670 treaties were signed by which Charles undertook to assist Louis in the projected war against Holland, on receiving a liberal subsidy. By secret articles, he also promised that he would declare himself a Catholic; and for this act of piety Louis paid him 150,000 pounds sterling, and agreed to furnish 6,000 French soldiers to repress any resistance of the English when the apostasy of their king should be publicly declared.[2]

Having thus obtained from Charles the most disgraceful treaty that can be found in English history, Louis turned his attention to Germany. There he met with little trouble. In November, 1671, the Emperor promised to remain neutral while France attacked the States General. Sweden abandoned the Triple Alliance for a subsidy. The smaller German states were still more easily managed. Those of any importance agreed, in consideration of various sums of money, that Holland should receive no aid in her hour of need. Louvois grumbled that he had to waste a day because the bishops of Münster and of Strasbourg got so drunk overnight celebrating the situation that they could do no business.[3] These episcopal authorities

[1] Lionne to Colbert de Croissy, February 23, 1669; Colbert to Lionne, March 18, 1669; Charles to Henrietta, March 22, 1669; Lionne to Colbert, May 4, 1669.

[2] The two treaties, one signed at Dover on June 1 [N. S.], 1670, and the other in December, are found in *Nég. rel. à la succession d'Espagne*, t. ii. part 4, sec. 1. The treaty provided for the payment of 2,000,000 livres tournois for the conversion, which represented about 150,000 pounds. — Colbert to Louis XIV., December 30, 1669, *et passim*.

[3] Louvois to Le Tellier, January 4, 1672.

were trying to the diplomats. Strasbourg's passions were lucre and liquor. "Every time the Bishop of Strasbourg has anything to pay," wrote Luxembourg, "he offers up prayers for peace, and every time he takes a drink he is eager for war." [1] The Bishop of Münster was a more belligerent character, and his career was not unlike that of some robber baron of an earlier age. At his court the soldier of fortune, the cutthroat, and the desperado were always welcome. His life was occupied in constant brawls, and in petty warfare with his neighbors. The revenues which were exacted as the dues of the church were spent either in drink and debauchery, or in the support of lawless soldiers, who eked out their pay by plunder. The Christian inhabitants of the provinces under Turkish misrule suffer less to-day from their governors than did the subjects of many of the petty states of Germany, of which the Bishopric of Münster was an extreme type. At last the bishops were sobered and paid, and they signed their treaties with France.

While Holland was thus isolated by an adroit diplomacy, the French armies were reorganized and prepared for war by the genius of Louvois. Louvois was a man of only thirty, but he had already acquired an influence over Louis greater than that of any other of his advisers, and which for many years was to prove disastrous to the best interests of France. His power over his master was due to talents of a high order. As a war minister he has had few equals. He was not one of the ordinary class of administrators who are content to follow in the traditions of their predecessors. To his innovations it was due that for fifty years the French armies were superior to those of any other

[1] Luxembourg to Louvois, January 31, 1672.

European state. No man understood better than he that, to fight well, a soldier must feed well. He established magazines of provisions; he saw that the baggage wagons were sufficiently numerous, that the guns were in good order, and that there was plenty of ammunition. Under his iron rule, the frauds of officers who kept in their command fifty barefooted and half-starved men, and drew pay for one hundred well-equipped soldiers, were checked, if they were not suppressed. Aided by Vauban, Louvois organized the engineers as a separate branch of the service. The rapidity with which cities yielded to the French is the best proof of its efficiency.[1]

It was impossible that the Dutch should remain ignorant of these preparations for their overthrow. They sought to counteract them, but with small success. When the Triple Alliance was formed, De Witt had expressed his fears at abandoning France in reliance on the unstable counsels of England.[2] His apprehensions were now to be realized. The Dutch prostrated themselves before Louis, in the endeavor to avert his hostility. They met only with rebuffs. If they sought to know wherein they had given offense, they were informed that it was better for them that their misdeeds should remain untold. Nor were they any more favorably received in England. They tried

[1] The reformations effected by Louvois are described with great clearness in *Histoire de Louvois*, t. i. ch. iii., by Camille Rousset. M. Rousset has made such research in the correspondence and archives of the department of war that he has left little to be added. One may, however, be permitted to doubt whether all his investigations have shown his hero to be any less responsible for the fatal political errors that have long been laid to his charge.

[2] *Letters of Sir William Temple*, i. 162.

in vain to keep Charles from deserting the alliance which he had made only four years before. In their extremity they sought to satisfy British pride by consenting that a whole Dutch fleet should lower its flag before a single English warship, if England would remain true to her agreements.[1] But if Charles did not resemble his brother of France in the qualities wherein he deserved admiration, he showed himself his equal in insolence when dealing with a weaker nation in distress.

All was now ready, and in May, 1672, Louis invaded Holland at the head of 100,000 men. The only justification for his act which he gave the world was, that he could no longer repress his dissatisfaction at the conduct of the United Provinces without tarnishing his glory.[2] At the same time the English fleet endeavored to effect a diversion by sea. The part of the English in this war was as inglorious as their undertaking it had been indefensible. On the sea the Dutch held their own, but on land everything yielded before the French. Holland had no forces with which she could resist such an army as that of the invaders, and city after city surrendered in rapid succession. In June the passage of the Rhine was effected. This famous feat of arms was in truth one of the easiest of Louis's many easy exploits. The French cavalry swam the river for the short distance that it was too deep to be forded. A few Dutch soldiers on the other shore immediately ran away.[3] Yet neither Miltiades at Marathon nor Charles Martel at Poitiers ever received one tenth of the adulation

[1] Réponse par les Etats Généraux, February 3, 1672.

[2] Ordinance of April 6, 1672.

[3] "A military operation of the fourth order," said Napoleon.

poured upon Louis XIV. for the passage of the Rhine, in which his own part was confined to standing upon the bank and looking on; "attached to the shore by his greatness," said Boileau, in words which were meant for praise. It is not strange that courtiers should have declared Louis to be a great general; the extraordinary thing is that both courtiers and king believed it.

The French had now overrun a large part of Holland, and, had their armies proceeded with rapidity, it is possible that they could have captured Amsterdam itself. The States General were overcome by terror at an advance which seemed irresistible, and in June their representatives presented themselves before the conqueror with the most humiliating proposals. They offered to surrender almost a third of the territory of the United Provinces, and to pay an indemnity of 10,000,000 livres for the expense Louis had incurred in accomplishing their ruin. Fortunately for the welfare of the republic, Lionne was dead, and the king was now controlled by the counsels of Louvois. The representatives were treated with studied discourtesy and their offers were declined. At last the French ultimatum was announced. Holland was required to surrender a very much larger portion of her soil; the war indemnity was fixed at 24,000,000 livres; the exercise of the Catholic religion was to be allowed in what little was left of the republic, and the Catholic priests were to receive stipends from the state. And lastly, in each year a solemn embassy must visit Louis and present him with a medal, on which should be inscribed a device thanking him for having the second time restored peace to the United Provinces.[1]

Even these terms, which would have been the an-

[1] Dispatch of Louis XIV. to Colbert, July 1, 1672.

nihilation of Holland as an independent state, Louis and Louvois in their infatuation believed would be accepted. "I am mistaken," Louvois wrote his father, "if they do not return and agree to all that has been demanded."[1] It was impossible for Louvois to attach any importance to moral forces. He recognized no force but brute force. He was insolent by nature; the Dutch were down, and he felt no desire to spare them. His intellect was too narrow to realize that the condition of affairs might change. He gained for himself a fame that he would not have desired; for to the blunders of Louvois, quite as much as to the determination of William, must we ascribe the deliverance of Holland from overthrow. Louis was easily induced to follow the counsels of his minister, and he was so happily organized that he never acknowledged, even to himself, that he had made a mistake. "Ambition and the love of glory are always pardonable in a young prince who has been as well treated by fortune as I," he wrote, when discussing afterwards his refusal to accept the proposals of the States General.[2]

Many of the Dutch had protested against the terms which had already been offered, and the insulting propositions of Louis roused the whole country to resistance. Already the dikes had been cut, and a large portion of Holland was restored to the ocean from which it had been won. The French could conquer the land, but the waves of the sea set bounds to their progress. Amsterdam was saved, and the opportunity for further victories was lost. In August, Louis rejoined his sultanas at Saint Germain, and the campaign was over.

[1] Louvois to Le Tellier, July 2, 1672.

[2] Mem. of Louis XIV. on campaign of 1672.

Odious cruelties were practiced in those parts of Holland of which the French had possession. "M. de Maqueline was obliged to burn a village," Luxembourg wrote Louvois, "and as it was night, nothing was saved. Horses and cattle were burned, and they say plenty of peasants, women and children."[1] The country was given over to pillage and conflagration, and such cruelties met with the approval of the minister of war. "Take all the advantage possible," he said, "without troubling yourself about the good or the ill will of the inhabitants."[2] "The soldiers roasted all the Dutch in the village of Swammerdam," he wrote the Prince of Condé; "they did not let one escape."[3] It was by such measures that Louvois roused his opponents to a desperate resistance. The waves of the sea laid waste the fields of Holland, but it was better than leaving them to be plundered by a brutal soldiery. The burghers of Amsterdam watched the waters rising about their pleasant villas, where they had smoked their pipes and counted their gains, with the feeling that this was less painful than to see them burned to the ground by the mercenaries of Luxembourg.

The excitement of the Dutch public led to a lamentable act of barbarity. John De Witt had long held the chief authority in the state, and he had shown alike the patriotism of a citizen and the wisdom of a statesman. He and his brother were now held responsible for misfortunes which they had been unable to avert. With better reason, they were charged with jealousy of the growing power of the Prince of

[1] Luxembourg to Louvois, November 16, 1672.
[2] Louvois to Luxembourg, August 27, 1672.
[3] Louvois to Condé, January 7, 1673.

Orange, the future William III. of England. The two brothers were torn to pieces by a brutal mob, and William of Orange, at twenty-one, was made Stadtholder and Captain-General of the republic. Young as he was, he possessed the obstinate determination, the power of heroic resistance, of his ancestors, and he hated Louis as his great-grandfather had hated Philip.

At last Europe, which apparently had been content to view with apathy the extinction of a prosperous state, was roused to action. The Emperor interfered in behalf of Holland. Spain gave such aid as she could. The Elector of Brandenburg joined the alliance, and in two years there was hardly a power in Germany that was not in arms against France. Nor was Charles long able to hold England in the interests of Louis. Never have the French been more hated by the English than at this period, when their king was a French pensioner, and when the gold of Louis was used to make England despicable in the sight of Europe. Charles struggled, with more constancy than he usually showed, to remain firm in his alliance. The French spent money freely in endeavors to corrupt the members of Parliament. But money is not efficacious against public opinion, where this has free opportunity for expression. In 1674, peace was made between England and Holland. By giving liberally to Charles, that he might prorogue the Parliament for long periods, the French representatives succeeded in keeping England neutral.[1] Though she no longer joined in the war against the Dutch, she did not take up arms in their behalf.

[1] "Rien ne me paraît d'une plus grande importance que d'eloigner l'assemblée du parlement d'Angleterre." — Louis XIV. to Colbert de Croissey, ambassador at London.

The invasion of Holland in 1672 led to a European war that was not ended until 1678. France had to contend with Holland, Spain, and the most of Germany. She received no assistance except from Sweden, whose military importance had greatly decreased since the days of Gustavus Adolphus. This formidable alliance had been excited by reckless vindictiveness, but it was confronted with resolution and success. It showed how far the resources of France exceeded those of any other European state, that, with only one unimportant ally, she was able to contend against such a combination. She possessed, however, many advantages. Holland was her only opponent who was not crippled by constant financial distress. The Dutch were obliged to contribute liberally towards the support of the armies of their confederates, and, as with all such alliances, the effectiveness of this was diminished by divided councils and mutual recriminations. On the other hand, one purpose governed the armies of France; they were supplied and equipped by Louvois, they were commanded by Luxembourg and Turenne. Turenne was intrusted with the army of the Rhine, and his last campaigns are regarded as masterpieces of the art of war. He had begun his military career at fourteen. During almost forty years of his life he had been actually engaged in fighting, he had become the greatest soldier of his age, and one of the greatest of history. As he was reconnoitring near the village of Sasbach, on July 21, 1675, a chance ball struck him and he fell dead. The eight marshals who were created after his death were declared to be only the small change for Turenne, but the French armies still continued to be led with ability. Luxembourg now revealed himself as a great captain.

Far inferior to Turenne, both in character and in the skill needed to conduct a successful campaign, he was perhaps his equal in the actual hour of battle. Often the Prince of Orange encountered him with every prospect of success, and as often the quick intuitions of Luxembourg seized the opportunity and gained the victory. Condé made his last appearance in the field during this war. At twenty-one he had been a great general; at fifty he was but an irresolute and unsuccessful commander, and he now retired from the service.

Holland was soon relieved from the burden of hostile occupation. Early in 1674, the French withdrew their forces from that country; the endeavor to chastise the republic was abandoned, and the scene of war was transferred to the Rhine and to Flanders. The occasion had been lost for the summary punishment of the offending Dutch, and Louis now concentrated his attention on obtaining some further territory from Spain. The French again took possession of Franche Comté, and each year they captured some towns in the Spanish Low Countries. The king took part in many of these sieges, and his military correspondence during these years is of interest. He delighted in warfare. He sent off letters to Louvois at all hours of the night; he was always in hot haste for the latest reports from the field; he gave directions as to the most trivial matters of military discipline. The men of a certain company must be up by six to report; the baggage wagons must pass by a certain bridge; the guards must encamp at a certain distance from the royal tent. In war, as in peace, Louis delighted in details. But the conviction of his greatness as a general more and more filled his mind. The adulation

that was poured upon him might have turned the head of a man more modest by nature. Colbert was less fervent in his praise than many others; he was one of the few who dared to grumble at his royal master. Yet Colbert wrote, when Besançon had surrendered after a little leisurely cannon practice: "Your Majesty has captured the citadel in twenty-four hours. We can but wonder in silence, and daily praise God that we live under the reign of a king whose power is bounded only by his desires." [1] Such flattery seems highly seasoned, but it was relished.

The accounts which Louis has given us of his campaigns are interesting from their frankness. Other men may have been equally content with themselves, but they have hesitated about giving solemn and permanent expression to their gratification. Writes honest Pepys: "I counted that I had made myself now worth about eighty pounds, at which my heart was glad and blessed God." Louis expresses his pleasure at his own exploits with the same naïveté, and sometimes upon no greater provocation. "It is with delight," he writes, "that I have laid siege to places which the greatest captains of our age have not dared to undertake. I aspired to surpass them, and at least I have succeeded in enterprises which they deemed impossible." [2]

And yet, often as he commanded his armies in person, he could never summon up resolution to fight a pitched battle. In 1676, the French with superior forces were near Bouchain. As the Prince of Orange marched to the rescue of the place, he exposed himself to an attack which could hardly have failed of suc-

[1] Colbert to the king, May 26, 1674.
[2] *Œuvres de Louis XIV.*, iv. 145.

cess. The Marshal of Lorges implored Louis to seize this opportunity for winning a decisive victory. Louvois and the other generals, better versed in the workings of the royal mind, dissuaded him. The Duke of La Feuillade threw himself at the king's feet, and implored him not to expose to any risk of battle a life so precious to France. "I yield," said Louis, "but with regret."[1] It was not entirely physical timidity that kept the king from such a venture. Certainly reckless courage was not one of his failings, but neither could he fairly be called a coward. During the many sieges which he conducted, he sometimes placed himself within range of a stray cannon-ball. To be sure, he did not remain long in such positions. But the danger to his life in a battle was almost infinitesimal. He would be stationed far in the rear, and conveyed away when there was the slightest risk of any approach of the enemy. It was not so much for his person that he was afraid as for his invincibility. He knew that in such an engagement there was always uncertainty. He could undertake a siege with absolute assurance of success; but in the field, chance, skill, accident, might overcome any advantages in numbers or position. He dared not incur the possibility of defeat. He would not face the contingency, however remote, that William of Orange might be proclaimed through Europe the conqueror of Louis XIV. in a pitched battle. He shrank from the vision of the great king escaping from the field in hot haste, spurring his charger, his majestic peruke lost, his concubines in dismay following their retreating lord, while low-bred Dutch soldiers rioted in the royal tent

[1] Louvois to Le Tellier, May 14, 1676; *Mémoires de Saint Simon*, xii. 6, 7; *Mém. de La Fare*, 284, ed. Michaud.

and feasted from the royal plate. Never after such a spectacle could he walk with the same majestic dignity through the stately gardens of Versailles.

France continued to show herself able to contend against her enemies with success. In 1678, Ghent and Ypres were captured, and the French conquests were carried into the heart of Flanders. On the other hand, the armies of the empire made no progress, and William of Orange was singularly unfortunate in his military operations.

In the mean time, as Louis had abandoned any hopes of chastising the insolence of the Dutch, he endeavored to draw them from the alliance against him by the offer of favorable terms. The commercial policy of France had alienated Holland as much as Louis's ambition.[1] The king found that he must propose concessions in order to induce that country to make peace. He accordingly announced his readiness to reduce largely the excessive tariff of 1667, and to do away with other restrictions which had hampered the trade of Holland without increasing that of France. These proposals had a mollifying influence upon the burghers of Amsterdam and of the great commercial cities. Louis endeavored also to conciliate the hostility of William of Orange; he made the most flattering suggestions, but without success.[2] The prince felt that it would be dishonorable to desert his allies; he was ambitious for reputation as a soldier, and he regarded France and her king with the animosity that a crusader felt towards the Crescent. But many of the

[1] Abundant proofs of this can be found in the correspondence between De Witt and the Dutch ambassadors at Paris.

[2] Louvois to Estrades, August 19, 1674; Louis to Ruvigny, August 25, 1674.

Dutch were less zealous in the prosecution of a tedious war from which they could now escape, not only without loss, but with actual gain. There was also a large party in Holland which was jealous of the influence of the Prince of Orange. They feared that he would seek to overthrow their republican institutions, and various incidents had aroused their apprehensions. The deputies of Gueldres offered William the sovereignty of their province, with the title of duke. Zutphen followed their example and Utrecht approved of the measure, but the step excited such opposition in Holland and Zeeland that the plan was abandoned. William's friends declared that he desired the offer of a crown only that, like Cæsar, he might put it by, but there were those who thought he would fain have had it.[1] The progress of the war had not been attended with such success as to excite enthusiasm. The Prince of Orange showed more taste than talent for fighting. His enemies declared that history told of no general who at the same age had lost so many battles, or had been forced to raise so many sieges.

At last terms were agreed upon, which secured to France and to Europe a few years of respite. Holland abandoned her allies, and was the first to lay down arms. The English had agreed with the United Provinces that if peace was not made by August 11, 1678, they would unite their forces against France. At eleven on the night of the 10th, the French and Dutch representatives at Nimeguen signed articles by which the war between their countries was brought to

[1] *Memoirs of Sir William Temple*, 93, ed. Michaud; Ruvigny to Pomponne, February 25, 1675; Van den Bosch to Estrades, February 18, 1675.

an end. The Dutch surrendered nothing save a few unimportant foreign possessions. On the other hand, by an edict that was immediately issued, their goods were allowed to enter France, subject only to the moderate duties of the tariff of 1664.[1] Many of the restraints upon their commerce which Colbert had established were now abolished. Holland had gained, rather than lost, by the seven years' war which had been undertaken to accomplish her overthrow. It was with good reason that the announcement of the treaty stirred the phlegmatic Dutch to enthusiasm; that their streets were filled with jubilant crowds; that the public buildings blazed with fireworks, and the fountains ran red with wine.[2] The Prince of Orange was, however, bitterly opposed to the peace. He declared it to be a shameful desertion of the allies, nor could he reconcile himself to the large accessions of territory which France received from Spain. He had been unable to prevent the agreement for a peace, but he attempted to break it in a manner that is a stain upon his memory. On the 14th of August, three days after the treaty had been signed, and when he must have known of its existence, he made a desperate assault on the French army before Mons. If he could gain an important advantage, he might still hope to be able to prevent the ratification of the treaty; but if he expected to win a victory from the Marshal of Luxembourg, he had learned nothing from the uniform experience of the past. A bloody battle was fought at Saint Denis, without advantage to either side. Two thousand men were killed and twice as many wounded

[1] *Actes et mémoires de la paix de Nimègue*, ii. 590–652; *Correspondance de Hollande*, 108.

[2] Avaux to Louis, September 29 and October 6, 1678.

to gratify William's desire to gain the glory of a victory, and to protract a war which had lasted for seven years. On the next day he received from the States General a letter telling him that peace had been made.[1]

Spain was compelled to yield the territories which Holland had agreed upon as the measure of compensation to which France was entitled. Franche Comté was surrendered, and has ever since remained a part of France. In Flanders, Saint Omer, Cambray, Valenciennes, and many other important cities were ceded, while Louis relinquished a few places which he had obtained by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.[2] The peace of Nimeguen fixed the northern boundary of France substantially as it remains to-day. The Emperor had

[1] There seems no justification for this battle, and it illustrates the merciless tenacity of the character of the Prince of Orange. Neither William's own statement, nor the version of his admirer, Sir William Temple, denies that the Prince was aware, as a matter of fact, that an agreement had been reached. William claims that he did not really know of the signature of the treaty, and so was at liberty to prevent a peace which he knew was imminent, and of which he disapproved. — Letters of William to Fagel, August 15, and to States General, August 17, 1678. Gourville is not always above suspicion, but he was an intimate friend, and his report of a conversation with the prince, p. 576, ed. Michaud, I think gives the facts of the case. From the reports that had reached William, he had no doubt that a treaty had been signed. At the same time, he had received no official notice, and could truthfully say that he had no certain legal knowledge of its existence. Years afterwards William spoke of Gourville as one of his oldest acquaintances, and wrote Portland to present his compliments. — William to Portland, July 13, 1698. The letters and reports of the Duke of Luxembourg contain an accurate account of the battle.

[2] *Actes et mémoires de la paix de Nimègue*, ii. 729–751.

no choice but to follow the example of his allies. The border provinces of Germany had been barbarously ravaged by the French armies; ashes marked the site of many once flourishing villages of the Palatinate; all desired peace. Only the Elector of Brandenburg was reluctant to make terms. He had captured Pomerania from Sweden, and he was loath to surrender it. Fidelity to his allies was one of Louis's virtues. He was resolved that Sweden should not suffer from the ill-success that had befallen her in a war undertaken in his behalf, even if he had to continue the conflict in order to compel restitution. The elector poured out his wrath on the Dutch. He had taken up arms to save them from destruction, he said, and now they had shamelessly deserted him; when they were again in extremity they would look in vain for the aid which they repaid with base ingratitude.[1] He implored Louis to let him keep a little of what he had gained.[2] But neither reproaches nor supplications were of any avail. Nearly everything that Sweden had lost was again surrendered to her. The elector and some of the other German princes were consoled by considerable sums of money, which France paid to secure restitution for her ally. By the summer of 1679, Europe was again at peace.[3]

The treaty of Nimeguen is the high-water mark in the fortunes of Louis XIV. He had encountered successfully a European coalition. He had gained important accessions of territory. France was strained by her exertions, but she was not in the wretched con-

[1] *Actes, etc., de Nimègue*, ii. 657–662.

[2] Elector to Louis, May 26, 1679.

[3] These various treaties are contained in *Actes, etc., de Nimègue*, t. iii., iv.

dition to which she was later reduced. The authorities of Paris in 1680 solemnly bestowed upon Louis the title of "the Great." Posterity has declined to recognize it, and the succeeding years of Louis's reign furnish abundant grounds for the refusal.

We must now turn to the internal affairs of the kingdom; to the efforts to increase its wealth by commercial regulations, and to enhance its piety by the persecution of heretics; to the influence exercised by the monarch upon literature, manners, and political institutions.

CHAPTER IV.

COLBERT.

1661–1683.

Jean Baptiste Colbert was born in 1619 at Rheims, and, like most of the great ministers of the Bourbon dynasty, he belonged to the middle classes. When he had become a great man, complacent genealogists traced for him an ancient pedigree, but in fact his ancestors were respectable and sturdy bourgeois. His father was a dealer in cloth, and in his shop the young Colbert may have acquired the habits of order, economy, and integrity which were to make him famous.[1] In appearance, as in conduct, he was distinguished from men like Fouquet, who squandered the nation's money with perfect good-breeding. His face was dark and forbidding; heavy black eyebrows, concealing deep-set eyes, gave him a stern and austere expression.[2] Amid a court where courteous and affable manners characterized the relations of even the bitterest enemies, Colbert's demeanor was brusque and his speech was icy. Mme. de Sévigné compared him to the North Pole. She had occasion to ask a

[1] *Mémoires d'Ormesson*, ii. 486, 487. "I have seen his father," says Ormesson; "he was a little fellow, with a respectable appearance, and was an honest man." The father came to Paris late in life, and bought a petty municipal office. Ormesson's informant said that Colbert was an exceptionally stupid boy.

[2] *Mém. de Choisy*, 575, ed. Michaud.

favor of him, and was as chilled by the interview as though she had ventured into the region of eternal snow.[1]

Little is known of the early years of Colbert's life, but when thirty-one he entered the service of Cardinal Mazarin. This employment proved the opening for a career which made him during many years the most influential man in France, and which modified the financial policy of that country.

His opinion of his employer was at first anything but favorable. In his letters he complains of the cardinal's irresolution, of his delays, and of his manners. Even the way in which Mazarin pursed his mouth and shook his head while talking, the young employee found most offensive. "He has never taken thought for the morrow," Colbert wrote Le Tellier, "and now he does not consider in the morning what will happen at noon." It was with difficulty, he said, that he could endure the conduct of a man for whom he had no regard.[2] Colbert's opinion of the cardinal changed in time. He received from Mazarin favors and money in abundance, and he was grateful. He discovered, also, that while it was easy to criticise the Italian, who made many promises and kept few, whose French was poor and whose manners were not always pleasing, yet this man who seemed so supple was a great statesman, who followed with undeviating purpose the policy that would increase the power of France.

While Mazarin was a sagacious politician, he was a poor financier. His private estate was in the same

[1] *Lettres de Mme. de Sévigné*, iii. 331 ; v. 143.

[2] Colbert to Le Tellier, June 12, 23, 1650, January 4, 1652. "Notre homme est encore pis qu'il n'estoit," he writes Le Tellier in 1652.

confusion as the public treasury, and Colbert desired an opportunity to bring order out of chaos. He told the cardinal that he must have some one to take charge of his affairs who would be zealous and faithful, and in whom he could put entire confidence, and he insinuated that the proper man was at hand. "I would not have allowed the horrible waste you have made of your property," he wrote Mazarin, with the same freedom of speech that he sometimes used in after years, when he had Louis XIV. for a master.[1] Mazarin was judicious enough to follow this advice. Colbert was made superintendent of the cardinal's estate, and he managed it with such skill that the cardinal died the richest man in France. Colbert devoted himself to his employment with the same untiring zeal that he showed afterwards in more important positions. He scolded his master roundly for his extravagance; he watched the smallest details of his affairs with eager interest. As he obtained more of Mazarin's confidence, he sometimes gave advice about political questions. In one letter he suggests plans for reforming the finances of the nation, in the next he says that he has found some cloth that will make an exceedingly warm *robe de chambre* for his Eminence, and apparently he was equally interested in both subjects. He gave a great deal of attention to the welfare of some sucking calves; he counted the eggs as carefully as a market-woman; he was solicitous about the cardinal's wine, anxious about his melons, and distressed about his clothes. When the king was to marry, Colbert was charged with some of the preparations, and this reduced him to a sad plight.

[1] Colbert to Mazarin, February 17, May 4, June 27, September 1, 1651.

It was to no purpose that Mazarin wrote him not to disquiet himself over such bagatelles.[1] Restless activity, and a desire that all things should be done right, whether great or small, were the distinguishing qualities of Colbert's character.

The supposed speech of Mazarin on his deathbed to Louis XIV. has been often quoted. "I owe you all, but I pay the debt in giving you Colbert."[2] It was not in such stilted language that the cardinal expressed himself, and this famous saying rests on no authority but the gossip of a vivacious and an untrustworthy abbé. But in the most solemn manner Mazarin left the record of his judgment on Colbert. By his will, made shortly before his death, the cardinal gave Colbert the house in which he was living, and he then says: "And I pray the king to employ him in his service, because he is faithful."[3] It was high praise and just praise. Extraordinary fidelity, rather than extraordinary intellect, rendered Colbert useful and made him famous.

Colbert was appointed superintendent of finances by Louis, and this mark of confidence was followed by many others. He was made a secretary of state; he was given charge of the navy, of the colonies, and

[1] *Lettres de Colbert*, t. i. 208, 220, 224, 424, *et passim.* "Never since I have been in the world," he writes Mazarin, "have I had so much anxiety as I have now lest something should be lacking at the king's marriage. I attend to nothing else from five in the morning until eleven at night." — Letter of March 5, 1660.

[2] *Mém. de Choisy*, 579, ed. Michaud.

[3] *Arch. des Aff. Etr. Fr.*, 171. "Estant fort fidèle." This was the will by which Mazarin left his estate to the king. The final will was executed a few days later, and Colbert was appointed one of the executors.

of the royal buildings. These varied employments required an enormous amount of labor, but they hardly satisfied his prodigious industry. He regarded sixteen hours as no more than a fair day's work. "You ask me whether it is better to work by day or by night," he wrote his son; "I answer that one must work both by day and night." For many years he exerted a large influence in the counsels of the king. His master's confidence was fully accorded to him, and the minister was willing to undertake duties which to us seem incongruous. He was intrusted with the delicate task of making preparations for the safe and the secret entry into the world of the children of Mlle. de la Vallière.[1] He attended to the mission thus assigned him with zeal, and without repugnance. He saw that proper persons were employed, and that due secrecy was preserved. The king regarded no service connected with himself as degrading; he saw no incongruity in employing his ministers as midwives, or in combining the care of his bastards with the charge of his finances.

Colbert regarded his master with affection and veneration. It might seem that an ostentatious and extravagant king would not have excited the admiration of an austere and thrifty financier. But Louis seemed as wonderful a sovereign to Colbert as to his other subjects, and the minister worshiped the monarch with entire sincerity. "We live under the greatest king who ever bore a sceptre," he wrote one of his subordinates, when Louis was peacefully taking possession of Franche Comté, "who is now at the head of his army, performing feats that will astound

[1] *Particularités secrètes de la vie du Roi,* a fragment written by Colbert himself.

posterity." [1] And yet his bourgeois common sense and his desire that taxation should be moderate and the finances in order were often so disturbed by Louis's extravagance that he rated him roundly. "Your Majesty," he wrote in 1680, "has never consulted your receipts in order to decide upon your expenses, a course so extraordinary that certainly there is no other example of it." [2] Unfortunately there have been innumerable examples of the same procedure, and with others, as with Louis XIV., it usually ends in bankruptcy.

The finances of France when Colbert assumed their charge, after the overthrow of Fouquet, were in the utmost confusion. Taxation was so heavy that a large part of the population were in constant misery. The government received so little of the proceeds that it was in constant embarrassment. In the cottage of the peasant there was need because the tax-gatherer took so much; in the palace of the king there was need because the tax-gatherer returned so little. In 1661, the sums collected amounted to 84,000,000 livres. Yet so much had been assigned for advances, or was absorbed in the payment of enormous rates of interest and of fraudulent debts, that the net income of the king was only 32,000,000.[3] Colbert resolved to increase the revenue of the king and to diminish the burdens of the people, and he did both. These results were accomplished in part by methods which would now be equivalent to repudiation, and would destroy national credit. But financial measures of that period cannot be judged altogether by present

[1] Colbert to M. de Sève, May 25, 1674.

[2] *Lettres, etc., de Colbert*, ii. 256.

[3] Forbonnais, *Recherches sur les Finances*, i. 289.

standards. There was so much of confusion, of irregularity, and of fraud, that the remedies were as violent as the disease. Evidences of indebtedness had been issued in great quantities, some for a small consideration and some for none at all. Yet all might claim to be regular on their face; they passed from hand to hand like other securities; the refusal to recognize any of them could be denounced as a violation of the national faith. Colbert was little disturbed by such considerations. He regarded the state as a minor, which could always avoid a contract made to its own detriment. He proceeded to revise the various issues of rentes, and the assignments of revenue, which constituted the national debt. Those that were wholly fraudulent in their inception he canceled; the others were reduced to the amounts which the government had originally received upon them.[1] It was in vain that an outcry was raised against such measures by those who claimed that they had purchased these securities in good faith, and that they would be ruined by their repudiation. Dubois declared the government of France to be strong because it could repudiate its debts at pleasure. Cer-

[1] Full accounts of these measures can be found in *Lettres et mémoires de Colbert*, a work in nine great volumes, containing the most important of Colbert's correspondence and official papers, and published by the French government under the superintendence of M. Clément, who devoted a large portion of his life to the study of Colbert's career. See, also, Forbonnais, *Recherches sur les Finances*. Clément's *Histoire de Colbert*, published in 1874, is founded upon his official correspondence, and is the most valuable work on the subject. In the *Journal d'Ormesson* can be found the complaints of those who were aggrieved by Colbert's measures, and this gives an interesting picture of the manner in which the minister was regarded at the time. See, also, *Registres de l'Hôtel de Ville*.

tainly it availed itself frequently of this prerogative. The measures of Colbert, though they may appear violent, were necessary and justifiable. The rentes had been neither issued nor purchased as such securities now are. Few sustained any more serious injury from their reduction than the loss of unconscionable profits which they had hoped to make. The credit of the state was so poor that its evidences of debt were purchased as one now deals in the bonds of Turkey, or of a bankrupt South American republic. There was the chance of a great profit, and purchasers felt neither surprised nor greatly aggrieved if they were disappointed in their hopes. As a result of such measures, the net receipts of the government were largely increased. In 1670, the gross receipts of the state were only 12,000,000 livres more than in 1661, but the net receipts had increased almost 40,000,000.[1] These figures are the best justification of Colbert's measures. Boileau wrote of the pale rentier, who had just read the edict reducing his income by a quarter, but the inconvenience experienced by some was far more than counterbalanced by the relief given to the taxpayers.[2] The cancellation of a large amount of securities issued in fraud and rarely held by *bonâ fide* purchasers was beneficial to the country at large, and by this result the policy of a statesman must be judged.

It was with equal vigor that Colbert proceeded against another class, who had profited too largely at the expense of the government. A large proportion of the taxes imposed in France were let to contractors, farmers general, as they were called. They paid to

[1] Forbonnais, i. 445.

[2] Boileau, *Satire*, 3.

the state the amount of their bids, and then collected from taxpayers all that could be justified by the financial edicts in force, and often much more. Such a system was vicious in its nature, and became more so in its operation. The farmers general were the richest class in the community. The splendor of their chateaux and the extravagance of their living were notorious. They drove the finest horses, drank the best champagne, and kept the most beautiful mistresses. A court was now organized to investigate the contracts made with the farmers of taxes during twenty-five years, and to compel the repayment to the state of whatever had been gained above a reasonable profit. Death was no protection, for the families were obliged to surrender a wealth that had been unjustly earned. Those who had dealt with the government were required to state the amount of their fortunes, and to show that these had been honestly acquired. If a financier was rich, it was regarded as conclusive evidence that he had made unjust gains at the expense of the state. Such legislation certainly savors of Turkish modes of procedure. Its justification was that the entire system of the collection of taxes in France was little better than that which is now practiced by Turkish Beys in Asia Minor, or by the tax-gatherers on the Upper Nile. The court proceeded with the vigor that was desired by the minister. Enormous fines were imposed on the wealthy financiers. Some escaped from France, some died of fright at the prospect of losing their gains. At last a composition was made. The various persons against whom proceedings were taken surrendered in the aggregate about 90,000,000 livres of evidences of debt against the government, and paid 20,000,000 in

money.[1] We may safely assume that the securities surrendered by the offenders had cost them but a small percentage of their nominal value.

It was characteristic of Colbert's conservatism that he suggested no change in a system which was essentially erroneous, and which was liable to constant abuse. With the exception of the taille, the sums to be realized from taxation continued to be sold to those whose interest was to pay the government as little as possible, and to collect from the people as much as possible.[2] During his own administration, however, the farms were let to the best advantage. Forty million livres were realized in 1670 from the proceeds of taxes which in 1661 had yielded but 23,000,000, and this great gain was not attended by any considerable increase in the burdens imposed upon the taxpayers.[3]

On the other hand, Colbert gave constant attention to reducing the amount of the taille, the direct tax imposed upon the property of the mass of the community, and he is entitled to the praise due the man who lightens the burdens of the poor.[4]

The result of such measures was a great improvement in the financial condition of the country. France was prosperous, and the sums which Colbert was able to furnish his master enabled him to display a magnificence and to support an army such as could be main-

[1] *Mém. d'Ormesson*, i. 400 *et pas.* Ormesson was a member of the Chamber of Justice. — *Lettres de Colbert*, t. i., ii.

[2] There were some taxes besides the taille which were not farmed, but of comparatively small importance.

[3] Forbonnais, t. i.

[4] *Mém. de Colbert au Roi: Lettres de Colbert*, ii. 120. In 1657, the taille had reached 53,000,000 livres, but it was less in 1661. At the close of Colbert's administration, it had been reduced to 35,000,000.

tained by no other monarch. The war of 1672 compelled Colbert to resort again to loans, but the credit of the country under his administration was good. He borrowed during the war at from six to eight per cent. and at the close of it he funded the debt at five per cent. Holland was the only other European government which at that period could obtain money at such low rates.

The ameliorations which Colbert effected in the financial condition of France, important and beneficial at the time, are of less interest now because the methods of taxation under the old régime have ceased to exist. On the other hand, his commercial system and its results can still furnish instruction. Similar questions arise at the present day. The policy of Colbert for fostering industry and increasing national wealth has had many advocates, both in his own country and in other lands. It demands, therefore, careful examination.

France was naturally a rich country. Her soil was fertile, her people were industrious and thrifty. She had a large seacoast; she possessed advantages of climate and situation favorable for her development as a manufacturing and distributing centre. Her population was three times as large as that of England. With judicious systems of taxation, and an opportunity for the free development of enormous natural resources, France was sure to increase steadily in population, wealth, and happiness.

This natural tendency Colbert sought to hasten by artificial means, and these endeavors are the most interesting part of his career. His name is identified with protective tariffs, and with paternal theories of government. The French have always shown them-

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selves believers in the efficacy of public control of private enterprise. The views of Colbert long exerted a large influence in this direction, and they are not without weight, even in the greatly modified form in which such tendencies still exist in France. It is, however, a serious though a common error to suppose that he introduced any new elements into commercial legislation. He was not the father of protectionism in France, any more than he was the first to insist on state regulation of the size of cloaks, or the quality of cloths. In fact, there was nothing novel in Colbert except his integrity and his efficiency. His zeal was new, his policy was old. He took the commercial theories of the past and enforced them with fresh vigor. Edicts, by which the entry of foreign goods had been restricted or prevented, form a part of the commercial history of the Middle Ages. They can claim the same sanction of antiquity as the edicts which forbade the shipment of gold, or prohibited undue luxury in dress. Import duties and the prohibition of importations can be found as far back as the seventh century; they can be found wherever trade was sufficient to attract the attention of the government, and the facilities of transportation made it possible for one country to deal with another. Under Philip the Fair, the exportation of wool was forbidden at the request of the French manufacturers, that they might get their raw material more cheaply. Repeated edicts were promulgated by Francis I. and his successors, which forbade the importation of various classes of foreign goods. In 1572, under Charles IX., an edict prohibited the importation of linens, velvets, carpets, and many other articles, "that the subjects of the king may devote themselves more to such manufactures, and gain the profits which

are now made by foreigners." [1] Both the practice and the theory of a protective tariff appear in this ordinance. Enactments of this kind were frequent in France and elsewhere, though they were characterized by the irregularities of all mediæval legislation, and were sporadic rather than systematic. Spain was especially severe in her prohibition of foreign manufactures, and long continued constant to this policy. In fact, it may be said that any legislation or lack of legislation by which men are allowed to manufacture as they please, buy as they please, or sell as they please, is essentially modern. What is new is liberty, and what is old is restraint.

The duties imposed on foreign goods during the early part of the seventeenth century were, on the whole, less in France than in Spain, England, and many other European countries. Sully had shown a tendency towards liberality in interstate commerce, and he endeavored, though without success, to agree with Queen Elizabeth upon a reciprocal reduction of the duties on English and French products. Richelieu and Mazarin were absorbed in foreign politics, and gave little attention to questions of duties or importations. The tariff on goods entering France was heavy on some articles and light on others; but at the period of Mazarin's death, the duties were adjusted rather with the view of obtaining the greatest amount of revenue than from any definite policy of protection.

If Colbert was not the originator of protective theories in France, still less was he the creator of her manufacturing industries. Doubtless he did much to stimulate them, but the manufactures of France had

[1] *Anciennes lois françaises*, xiv. 241.

been important before the Edwards began to assert their claims to the French throne. The cloths of France were sold in the East in the days of the crusaders. By the thirteenth century, the knives and leather of Rouen found a market from Scotland to Sicily. The cutlery and the jewelry of Languedoc were known over all of western Europe. Under Louis XI. the manufacture of silk goods was established, and in the time of Richelieu forty thousand people in Touraine alone earned their livelihood by this industry. Many of the trades which furnish articles of luxury and of beauty reached a great development under Francis I. and Catherine de Medici. The influence of the Renaissance was felt in the artistic work of France almost as much as in that of Italy. Copper and bronze wares, furniture, plate, and pottery were made with a perfection which still excites admiration. Catherine established at Orleans manufactures of carpets and of silk stockings. At Nîmes fine serges were made, laces at Senlis, and morocco goods at La Rochelle. Under Henry IV. mulberry-trees for silkworms were planted extensively in southern France. Workmen came from Italy to assist in developing the manufacture of glass. Manufactories were started of crapes, satins, laces, and damask. The manufactories of paper in Angoumois were said to have been the largest in the world, until an injudicious impost checked their prosperity.[1] In the early part of the seventeenth century, the industries of France, though insignificant if contrasted with those of to-day, were very considerable when compared with those of other nations at that period. Colbert himself declared that in 1620 the wools of England and

[1] *État de la France: Rapport sur Limoges.*

of Spain were manufactured into cloths in France, and that Marseilles controlled the trade of the Mediterranean.[1]

French industry was less prosperous when Colbert assumed office, but the explanation for this was found in the condition of the country. For almost thirty years France had been engaged in war without intermission. The evils of this long struggle had been aggravated by the disturbances of the Fronde; the fields had been ravaged alike by foreign and by domestic soldiers; ruinous taxation had accompanied the other calamities of war; the manufactures of France were affected by the same causes that had distressed the whole nation. Though depressed, they were still considerable. Not only did they supply domestic consumption to a large extent, but French wares of many varieties, linen goods, serges, hats, gloves, woolen and silk stockings, were exported.[2] The exports of French goods into Holland and England were estimated at 80,000,000 livres, a large amount for that period.[3] Brandies and wines in large quantities were also sent into these and other countries; and when the crops were good, wheat was an article of export.

The manufacturing industries of France were dear to Colbert, and in every way he sought to foster them, but it is questionable whether his judgment equaled his zeal. The fundamental article of Colbert's commercial creed was that the wealth of a country is measured by the amount of precious metals which it possesses. To this tenet he constantly refers, on it his entire system was based. "We shall all agree on

[1] *Rapport de* 1663.

[2] *Adresse des six corps des marchands*, 1654.

[3] *Mém. de Jean de Witt*, vi. 182.

this principle," he writes, "that it is the abundance of money in a state which alone makes the difference in its greatness and in its power."[1] In 1663, he gave, as the reasons for the decline of French commerce, war and the facility with which merchants were allowed to send money out of the kingdom. "A great deal of money is going out of the kingdom," he said, "and none is coming in."[2] It followed naturally from this theory that he regarded any profit gained by a foreigner from a sale of products in France as necessarily a loss to that country. There was an aggregate amount of wealth, and what was taken by one state was lost by another.[3] He begrudged every penny made by the English or Dutch traders as one that might have been obtained for France. In conformity with these views, he frequently endeavored to prevent the export of gold from the country. Edicts of this nature formed a part of the mediæval jurisprudence of France. They were renewed under Colbert, and under his successors, who adopted his errors though they imitated few of his virtues. Such edicts could not be enforced, and Colbert was obliged to recognize this fact. His subordinates were told that they should wink at the violations if they were not too numerous. A merchant of Marseilles might send gold to settle his balances in Italy or the East, with a strong probability that it would not be confiscated by the state; but such edicts were occasionally enforced, and they

[1] *Mém. sur la Commerce*, August 3, 1664; *Lettres de Colbert*, ii. 263. This *Mémoire* is in Colbert's own handwriting. See, also, *Mémoire* of 1663, and innumerable places in his letters and official documents.

[2] *Rapport de* 1663.

[3] *Lettres, etc., de Colbert*, ii. 270.

were held over the commercial community as a perpetual menace.[1]

From increased manufactures the minister anticipated a twofold advantage: they would furnish employment for many laborers, and they would keep in the country the gold which would otherwise be used in paying foreigners for their wares.[2] He endeavored, therefore, to foster them, both by government aid and by tariffs which should exclude foreign goods. He gave assistance to industries that already existed, and new ones were established. Manufactories of carpets, tapestries, glass, point lace, tar, and other articles were started in various cities.[3] To many of these enterprises the government furnished money, to many of them it granted monopolies of the goods which they made. Skilled laborers were obtained from other countries, who could impart the secrets of their trades. Glass-workers were brought from Murano, cloth manufacturers from Holland, artisans from Saxony versed in the smelting of tin. The minister gave his personal attention to many of these industries. He corresponded with the managers, advised, exhorted, and berated. He was rejoiced at their success, and filled with dismay and indignation when they did not

[1] *Lettres, etc., de Colbert*, ii. 179 *et passim.* The penalty for sending away gold was nominally death.

[2] *Mém. au roi*, 1669; *Lettres*, ii. 713 *et passim.* Colbert regarded the trade with Spain as the most important, because goods sold in that country were largely paid for in gold. — *Instruction pour le Comte de Vauguyon*, September 29, 1681. Spain was so poor a country that it had nothing with which it could pay except the gold received from its colonies. It may safely be assumed that its trade was not one quarter as important to France as that of either Holland or England.

[3] *Mém. au roi*, 1673, and letters *passim.*

realize his anticipations.[1] The most of these industries were prosperous for a while, but this prosperity was certainly to some extent obtained at the cost of the community. To many of the projectors of new enterprises Colbert granted monopolies of ten, twenty, or thirty years.[2] Later in his career he recognized the fact that he had granted exclusive privileges too lavishly, and that the benefits for which he hoped had not always resulted from them.

Often an industry that before had been practiced on a small scale by many was consolidated in the hands of a single monopolist, whose gains were obtained by making purchasers pay more dearly. A monopoly for ten years was granted in 1665 on the manufacture of point lace, which enabled the proprietors to pay thirty per cent. dividends.[3] But the minister had to protect the establishment against riots of the working-people of Alençon, who claimed that 8,000 persons were forced to abandon the craft by which they had long earned their livelihood.[4] The girls at Auxerre complained likewise that they were forced to work in the new manufactory, which had received a monopoly, for less than they had earned working for themselves at their own homes.[5] In 1679, in

[1] There are innumerable letters of Colbert discussing the condition of various industries, what they should do and what they should not. Many of them are found in the volumes of his correspondence which have been printed, and in *Correspondance administrative sous Louis XIV.*, t. iii.

[2] Edict, August, 1664. A monopoly of a certain kind of carpet for thirty years, etc.

[3] Savary, *Dictionnaire du Commerce.*

[4] Superintendent at Alençon to Colbert, September 7, 14, 1665, *et passim.*

[5] Superintendent of Burgundy to Colbert, November 4, 5, 1667, *et passim.*

answer to an offer to establish a new enterprise on receiving a monopoly, the minister replied declining the proposition, and saying that it was no longer the policy of the government to grant such favors except in extraordinary cases.[1]

Many of the manufactures thus started under Colbert's protection received large sums from the treasury. What was given to new enterprises with the one hand was taken from the taxpayer with the other. Not only did such assistance increase taxation, but those who received it came to rely on the aid of the government, and did not establish themselves on an independent footing. The minister found that the more he gave, the more was asked. "The merchants," he wrote, in 1671, "do not try to surmount by their own industry the difficulties which they encounter, so long as they hope to find easier means through the authority of the king. They seek to obtain advantages of every sort, and declare that, unless aided, their manufactures will be ruined."[2] Many of the industries which had been established by the aid of the government could only be kept in existence by the same means. Left to struggle with the ordinary laws of trade, they were forced to succumb. Forty years later, we find Louis XIV. giving a pension to some one who had undertaken the manufacture of laces at the royal instance, without success; and an establishment of serges, which had started with the assistance of Colbert, was still demanding and receiving help to keep it in existence.[3] "Never have manufactures decayed so fast in the kingdom," wrote the superin-

[1] *Lettres de Colbert*, ii. 715.

[2] *Ib.* ii. 633, October 2, 1671.

[3] *Archives des Finances: Decisions du roi*, 1708–1723.

tendent from Rouen, in 1685, "as since we have endeavored to increase them by the interference of the government."[1] A year later, the comptroller declared that it was impossible to establish new industries, and they must take steps to assist those which were then on the point of expiring.[2] From many quarters came demands for aid to save establishments which were sinking into hopeless decay.[3]

Colbert was not content with aiding individual enterprises; he wished to assist the entire body of French industry by measures for its protection. The first general tariff of Colbert was issued in 1664. It did not materially alter the duties which already existed, and it greatly simplified the multiplicity of conflicting duties and tolls which checked the commerce of France. It was unquestionably beneficial to the country. In this as in all his legislation, Colbert insisted upon one advantage for the manufacturer. No duties were allowed to fall on the raw material which they had occasion to use. Prohibitory duties on manufactured articles and freedom for raw material constituted the theory of protection that was advocated by him and his successors; it was this which they sought to carry out, subject to the irregularities resulting from the constant and pressing needs of the treasury.[4]

In 1667 a second tariff was adopted, which was decidedly protective in its character. The duties were raised on everything, and were often doubled or trebled.

[1] Intendant de Rouen à Con. Gén., October 5, 1685.

[2] *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généreaux*, i. 545.

[3] *Ib. passim.*

[4] That this was the established policy of France is stated by the Comptroller General, in 1686, almost in those words. — *Correspondance des Con. Gén.*, i. 168.

On many articles they were prohibitory, and Colbert's purpose was now to exclude from the French markets many, and indeed most, of the goods which were purchased from other nations. This tariff called forth a vigorous protest from the Dutch and English merchants; it was one of the causes of the ill-will of Holland toward France which resulted in the Triple Alliance and the war of 1672. Both of these nations threatened to retaliate by prohibiting the importation of French wines and brandies. Colbert insisted that they would not dare to resort to such measures, but at last these articles were either prohibited, or subjected to greatly increased duties.[1] The minister consoled himself as best he could. The consumption of wine in England would be increased by the higher duties, he declared, "because we find that wines are consumed in the greatest abundance in places where they are the dearest." [2]

Experience did not confirm this novel commercial theory. The manufacture of wine, then as now one of the most important in France, was not prosperous during the latter part of the seventeenth century, and diminished trade with other countries was universally assigned as the cause.[3] The wars of the king, and the warfare of commerce instituted by the minister, united in reducing the exports of France.

In the absence of statistics, it is difficult to ascertain

[1] Colbert to Pomponne, ambassador in Holland, September 27, 1669, and letters *passim*.

[2] Colbert to Pomponne, March 28, 1670. "Besides," he adds, "it is difficult, and indeed impossible, for the English to abstain from drinking our wines."

[3] See reports from the provinces in *État de la France*, 1698, and the correspondence of the Comptrollers General from 1683 to 1699.

the exact effect of Colbert's policy upon the manufacturing industries of France. Even in our days it is not easy to state the exact results of economic legislation. But the belief which is often entertained that Colbert's administration was the beginning of an era of great development for French industries is not supported by the facts. We have already seen that the manufactures of France were important long before he systematized the protective theories of legislation. During the first years of his administration, the condition of the country was certainly flourishing. With a fertile soil and an industrious people, France was sure of a reasonable prosperity, except when it suffered too severely from the ravages of war or the ravages of the tax-gatherer. By the order which he restored to the finances, Colbert lightened the burden of taxation. For eleven years the country enjoyed almost unbroken peace. A nominal war with England, and the occupation of some of the undefended possessions of Spain, did not check the general prosperity.

This condition of affairs was short-lived. Long before the end of Colbert's ministry, the condition of trade was far from satisfactory. The weight of taxation, the extravagance of the king, the wars with Spain and Holland, all had some effect in producing this result. The fact, however, clearly appears that the policy of Colbert was not successful in building up great manufactures. The industrial condition of France was no better in 1683, when he died, than in 1664, when his first tariff was adopted.

Such a result cannot be attributed entirely to the ambition and the extravagance of Louis XIV. The miserable condition of France at the close of his reign is well known. It is not so familiar, but it is quite as

certain, that long before that time the artificial impulse which Colbert gave to manufacturing industries had become inoperative in producing increased wealth or prosperity. The statistics at the time he died, and during the years immediately preceding and following, throw light upon this question. In 1683, the proceeds of taxation exceeded the amount collected in 1663 by about twenty per cent., and a considerable portion of this excess was due to the fact that the imposts were farmed to better advantage. If France had been prosperous during Colbert's administration, if her industries had been flourishing, if she had developed from a poor agricultural country into a rich manufacturing state, such an increase in taxation would not have been oppressive. To a large extent, it would have been met by the natural growth in revenue when a people is gaining in wealth. In 1683, France had enjoyed five years of entire peace. The war with Holland that ended in 1678 had not been a severe strain on her resources. The Edict of Nantes had not yet been repealed. Yet we have Colbert's own statement that the country was not able to bear the burden of taxation, that the peasantry were miserable, and that the condition of trade was poor. All the letters from the provinces were full of the misery of the people, he said; even the bishops wrote about it.[1] The official correspondence at this period, and immediately after it, bears witness to the same state of affairs. In Rouen, the manufacturers of cloth fared poorly, and the laborers complained of the wages which they received.[2] At Poitiers, trade was depressed, and house rent was very low. At Limoges,

[1] *Mém. de Colbert*, 1680, 1681, 1683.

[2] Intendant of Rouen, February 20, 1680.

the manufacture of coarse cloths was almost at an end; the industry of point laces in Auvergne was not prosperous; the manufacturers of Soissons and the merchants of Paris asked the king to come to their assistance and revive their trade.[1] The population had diminished apart from any emigration of Protestants.[2] Such reports as these show that before the exhausting wars of the latter part of Louis's reign, and both before and immediately after Colbert's death, the industries of France were far from being in a flourishing condition. "Never have the complaints of the misery of the people been more just," wrote the Comptroller General in 1686; "one needs only to visit some of the provinces to be convinced of it."[3]

The commercial policy of Colbert was continued after his death, but we find no signs of increasing prosperity. French industries, which have been thought to owe their first great development to his influence, continued to diminish instead of increase for more than thirty years after he died. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes did not change the condition of the country from one of prosperity to one of depression; it merely aggravated evils which already existed. The trouble with the French manufactures was

[1] Intendant, Poitiers, March 26, 1684; Limoges, July 22, 1687; Auvergne, July, 1688; Soissons, September 27, 1688. All of these complaints, and very many more of the same nature, are to be found in the correspondence of the superintendents with the Comptroller General. See, also, *Mém. sur le commerce*, presented by merchants of Paris, 1685. In 1691, an English traveler, going from Calais to Paris, says: "The fields are uncultivated, the villages unpeopled, the houses dropping to decay." — Burton's *Diary*.

[2] *Mém. sur le misère du peuple*, 1687.

[3] *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux*, i. 545.

not a lack of workmen, but a lack of demand. The exports to other countries were greatly diminished. The farmers were too poor to be large consumers. A barefooted peasant, clothed in rags and living on chestnuts and black bread, had no money with which to purchase either the luxuries or the comforts of life.

Complaints of diminished trade and declining industries came from every quarter during the last twenty years of the century.[1] In 1698, the superintendents of the different provinces were ordered to make detailed reports of their condition. This work was often done in a perfunctory manner, and the statistics are not as full and trustworthy as we could desire. From them, however, one can get an approximate idea of the condition of France before the beginning of the war of the Spanish Succession.

The country contained, as it long had done, many industries of different kinds, but their condition, with few exceptions, was one of decay. In Abbeville, the manufactories of cloth established in 1665 were still in existence, but they gave their workmen beggarly wages, and a good artisan received no more than three cents a day.[2] Alençon suffered because no market could be found for its goods, and Poitou from the same cause. In Touraine, where 40,000 people had been engaged in the manufacture of silk under Richelieu, there were now but 4,000. The manufacture of cloth in that province dated from before the time of Louis XI.; the production was now only one quarter of what it had been, and the tanneries had suffered a still greater decline. In Maine, the industry of coarse linen, which dated

[1] *Correspondance des Con. Gén., passim.*

[2] *Etat de La France,* ii. 175–177. This would be no more than fifteen cents a day now.

back to 1248 and had once employed 20,000 workmen, had only 10,000 in 1692 and but 6,000 in 1698. At Lyons, where there were once 18,000 looms employed in the manufacture of silk, there were now but 6,000. Brittany complained that the English and Dutch had learned to make various wares which they had formerly bought in that province, and trade suffered from the loss of foreign custom.[1] Languedoc and the city of Marseilles seem to have been the most prosperous sections of France.[2] Less opulent neighbors looked with envying eyes, and complained that all the rich men were to be found in Marseilles.[3] That city was a free port. Languedoc enjoyed the advantage of local states to regulate its affairs, and from its position as a foreign province it was to some extent outside the commercial system of France. In a time of general depression Languedoc was prosperous, and the superintendent reported that the only demand of the population was for still greater freedom of intercourse, and a further reduction of both export and import duties.[4]

In 1700, after the system of Colbert had been in force for over thirty years, a council of commerce was organized, to advise the government as to the best measures to be adopted in view of the depressed condition of trade.

The principal cities of France were represented by the leading merchants, men selected by their fellows, of large experience in business, and certainly competent to give an intelligent opinion. They were not apt

[1] *Etat de la France*, iv. 105, 147, 375, 382 ; v. 489, etc.
[2] *Ib.*, v. 281 *et seq.*
[3] *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux*, i. 204, 256.
[4] *Etat de la France*, v. 445.

to criticise the policy of the government, to which their reports were made, unless they were convinced that it was wrong. All agreed that the manufactures of France were in a very depressed condition, and one only, the deputy of Rouen, approved of the system of Colbert.[1] The purchase of foreign goods, he declared, drew money from the state, and should be prevented. The others were all of the opinion that excessive tariffs had been injurious to French interests. The deputy of Dunkirk insisted that the exorbitant duties that had been imposed on foreign goods, while profiting a few manufacturers, had been injurious to the community. The people of La Rochelle complained that the duties on imports from Portugal had cost them their market for the cloths which they had formerly sold in great quantities to that kingdom. The representative of the great manufacturing city of Lyons claimed that, as a result of the high tariff, France, to a large extent, had lost her foreign markets. "We must abandon the maxim of M. Colbert," he said, "who claimed that France could do without the rest of the world." The delegate from Bordeaux declared that the excessive duties on foreign goods had checked the market for French products, and that the entire period since 1667 had been marked by frequent failures. The reports from Lille, Bayonne, and Nantes were to the same effect. "Liberty," says the deputy of Nantes, in language that might come from a member of the Cobden Club, "is the life of commerce." Such reports show beyond contradiction that

[1] These reports, in MSS., are now in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Copious extracts from them have been published by M. Clement and M. Dareste de la Chavanne. Some of them are also found in *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux.*

in 1701, before the war of the Spanish Succession had begun, the commerce and the manufacturing industries of France were, to use the words of the deputy of La Rochelle, in a condition of extreme depression.[1]

The amount of exports also fails to show any large development in commerce as a result of the system of Colbert. It is difficult to obtain trustworthy figures, but the exports in 1716 are stated at 118,000,000 livres; a figure little if at all exceeding their amount fifty years before. Seventy years later they were five times as large.[2] A careful study of the condition of France shows that the latter half of the seventeenth century was not a period of great industrial or commercial development. In the eighteenth century, and especially in the latter part of it, the wealth of the country increased largely and rapidly. The tendency towards greater freedom in thought, the impatience of innumerable restraints, and the jealousy of countless privileges, which at last overthrew the old régime, modified also the commercial systems of France. A marked development in business enterprise, and in industries of every kind, was the result. It is to the spirit of the eighteenth century, and not to the systems of Colbert, that we must attribute the progress of France as a commercial and a manufacturing nation.

[1] *Rapport du deputé de La Rochelle.* "On ne s'estonnera pas de l'extreme abaissement ou il se trouvait réduit. On conviendra que de fausses vueus en sont la cause, et qu'ayant prétendu nous passer de toutes les autres nations, tandis qu'au contraire elles peuvent se passer de nous, nous nous sommes fort abuséz."

[2] Arnould, *Balance du commerce;* Levasseur, *Classes Ouvrières.* The exports and imports increased from 212,000,000 livres in 1716 to 1,153,000,000 in 1787.

The industries which the minister endeavored to protect he was resolved also to direct. The guilds of the Middle Ages had regulated in the minutest details the manner in which their various trades should be practiced, and in the efficacy of such measures Colbert was a firm believer. "The only way to have our manufactures perfect, and to establish good order in commerce, is to have them all uniform," he wrote.[1] He deplored the greed of the merchants who, for an insignificant personal gain, would neglect provisions that were for the general good.[2]

Forty-four edicts in all, regulating industries of different kinds, were issued during his administration. They prescribed the methods to be employed, and the quality of goods to be produced, in the most minute detail. Three hundred and seventeen sections instructed the dyers as to the manner in which they must dye their wares. The manufacturers of cloths and of silks were required to make them according to appointed methods. The cloths must possess a certain weight, they must be of a certain length and breadth.[3] A violation of these innumerable regulations was severely punished. A manufacturer who had received an order from London or Geneva for goods of a lighter weight or a different pattern than was allowed by the ordinance, and who attempted to fill it, might find

[1] Colbert to Barillon, March 7, 1670.

[2] Colbert to superintendent of Languedoc, January 28, 1682. "These merchants want entire liberty to change the length and fabric of their garments, which will lead to the complete ruin of manufactures."

[3] Colbert to superintendent of Amiens, September 17, 1682. Remarks as to the efficacy of such provisions, and complaints of their frequent violation, occur constantly in Colbert's correspondence.

himself with his feet in the stocks as a reward for his enterprise. The artisan who by accident had made a piece of cloth a few inches shorter or longer than the size prescribed, or who applied some new device by which the work could be better or more quickly done, might be exposed in the public square, and consider his offense while the boys threw rotten eggs at him.[1]

Ordinances of this nature, like other regulations of paternal governments, are sure to be violated. They excited constant hostility in those in whose interest they were supposed to be framed. Such opposition irritated Colbert instead of instructing him. He insisted the more that the prosperity of French industry could be assured only if goods were made in undeviating fashions and patterns, from generation to generation. A policy which Colbert had adopted naturally seemed of equal importance to his successors. Two hundred and thirty edicts of this character were published between Colbert's death and 1739.

Even though often violated, these regulations checked industrial progress; they prevented improvements in appliances, they increased the cost of goods; and purchasers from other countries resorted to markets where they could buy what they desired, of newer patterns, and for cheaper prices. It is probable that interference such as this, actuated by the best of motives, checked the industries of France as much as the wars of Louis XIV. An amiable busybody often does more harm than a selfish tyrant. A century later, an eyewitness declared that he had seen one hundred pieces of cloth destroyed in a morning, because some thread was lacking, some margin unequal, or some dye un-

[1] Instruction of March 18, 1671.

satisfactory.[1] It was not until 1779 that the government abandoned its long endeavor, and allowed manufacturers to make their goods to suit themselves and the tastes of their customers.

The system which Colbert adopted in reference to agriculture interfered with its freedom as much as the means by which he sought to develop manufactures. The state took the place of the laws of trade, and with small success.

The free exportation of grain had often been prevented by former governments, and this policy Colbert enforced with a degree of vigor that had been hitherto unknown. During fourteen years of his administration we find no less than twenty-nine edicts regulating the exportation of wheat. By thirteen it was allowed, subject to varying duties; by eight it was allowed free of any duty; and by eight it was absolutely prohibited. The peasant when he sowed his grain, the merchant when he indulged in the dangerous speculation of buying it, had no certainty as to whether their market would be free or restricted. It was not the actual condition of the crop, but the impression that might be produced by the reports of ill-informed officials, that decided their fate. In 1679, complaints came from Provence at the exportation of wheat, while Languedoc demanded its continuance. It was hard to reach a conclusion under such circumstances, wrote Colbert, but if the superintendents would give further details, the king would decide what was for the real interest of both provinces.[2] Such questions were constantly submitted to the omniscient judgment of the government. The results of this sys-

[1] *Mém. de La Platien*, 1778.

[2] Colbert to superintendent of Limoges, April 13, 1679.

tem of perpetual interference were far from satisfactory. The soil of France, even with defective tillage, was capable of raising more than enough wheat to supply her own people; but in this rich agricultural country a dearth occurred on an average every three years.[1] The official reports show only too clearly how often famine prevailed in a land which nature had so much favored. In 1675, the inhabitants of Dauphiny had for their diet only roots, and bread made from acorns, and when this failed they were driven to eat grass and bark.[2] In Poitou, in 1686, they had been without bread for two years.[3] In 1692, seventy thousand people in Limoges were living on rotten chestnuts, with begging as the only means of livelihood left to them.[4] In Normandy, in 1693, the peasants were dying of hunger; convoys of provisions were attacked and plundered by starving men and women, in whom one could hardly recognize the appearance of humanity. Their misery and poverty were declared to be greater than could be imagined.[5]

While restricting the sale of grain did not secure abundance for the consumer, it seriously interfered with the prosperity of the producer. Imperfect means of transportation rendered it difficult to move the

[1] The fluctuations of prices were often sudden and extreme. At Soissons, for example, wheat sold at 22 crowns the muid in 1683, and at 46 the next year. — *Cor. des Contrôleurs Gén.*, i. 84. In Languedoc, in 1694, it fell in two months from 90 to 40 sous. — *Ib.*, 374. Still more violent fluctuations occurred in 1691, when there was a dearth of great severity.

[2] Letter of Lesdiguières, May 29, 1675.

[3] Letter of superintendent of Poitou, March 11, 1686. These letters are found in *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux.*

[4] Superintendent of Limoges, January 12, 1692.

[5] Superintendent of Normandy, May, 1693.

crops; and when to this was added a succession of arbitrary edicts by which the authorities at Paris interfered with the operation of the laws of supply and demand in Artois or Languedoc, it is not strange that we should find in some years complaints that grain was rotting in the barns; in others that absolute destitution prevailed, and that food could not be had at any price.[1] It resulted, also, that new lands which might have been brought under cultivation were allowed to lie waste, and that the farmers had neither money nor energy to improve the condition of those which were tilled. In 1715, six years' remission of taxes was offered to those who would cultivate the fields which had been abandoned. No such legislation is now needed in France. Seventy years later, Arthur Young found that agriculture in France had not advanced beyond the methods of the Middle Ages. Indeed, there is something pathetic when we consider how earnestly Colbert labored for the public good, and how often he failed in his endeavors. He loved the people as a father does his children. He wrote the superintend-

[1] The correspondence which could be cited, to show how often these conditions existed, would fill pages. In 1684, for example, the superintendent writes that Provence was gorged with wheat. The Duke of St. Simon had 70,000 crowns' worth on hand, and could find no sale for it. In June, 1687, the superintendent writes from Poitiers that the crop of 1686 is still unsold. Foreigners were so often prevented from buying that they would no longer purchase even when the sale was allowed. In 1690, wheat had been kept in the granaries of Provence for two years, and land was left uncultivated. The people of Flanders declared that they would support the increasing burden of taxation with patience, if only they could be allowed to sell their crops when they thought best. — Letter of superintendent, October 17, 1691. Such complaints alternate with reports of entire dearth and frequent deaths from starvation.

ents to notice how the peasants were dressed, what sort of furniture they bought, and whether they had joyous festivities at marriages and fête days. "These things," he added, "will show if their condition is better than it was."[1] But it is impossible to doubt that the system which he adopted hindered the progress of those whose welfare he so much desired. Firm in the belief that the government knew what was for the interest of the citizens better than they did themselves, manufacturers were protected, and industry and agriculture were regulated, until the manufacturer was bankrupt, the artisan was starving, and the peasant left his fields untilled, to live on acorns.

Colbert's activity was exerted in almost every department of government. The navy had been neglected under Mazarin, and at his death France had but thirty ships of war. In 1677, the French navy consisted of over two hundred and fifty ships, and about fifty thousand men.[2] The same attention was given to increasing the carrying trade of France. Colbert encouraged the construction of ships at home and the purchase of them abroad, that the profits of carrying might in future be enjoyed by the French. A duty was imposed upon ships owned by foreigners and discharging cargoes in France.[3] It was one of Colbert's dreams that France should become the great colonial power of Europe. There was a fair opportunity for her to acquire the position which was afterwards attained by England. Spain and Portugal could not

[1] *Lettres de Colbert*, ii. 551.

[2] *Lettres, Instructions*, etc., t. iii.

[3] This duty was imposed by Fouquet, and was the revival of an ancient provision of a similar nature. — *Cor. Adm. sous Louis XIV.*, iii. 30, Int.

be dangerous rivals. The decay of Spain was dissolving her colonial empire. Portugal had with difficulty succeeded in regaining her national existence, and the days of her importance on the great seas were passed. Holland had largely profited by the losses of these powers, but there was no reason why a kingdom like France should not build up a foreign empire far more extensive than that of the Seven Provinces. France had vague claims of proprietorship over a large part of North America, which could have been turned into a substantial authority. From her possessions in Canada, enterprising pioneers were pushing out over the prairies of Illinois. Others were extending their discoveries along the whole course of the Mississippi in the name of the Lilies of France. Many of the West India islands were already hers. The English empire was not yet established in the East Indies. That great prize lay ready for the nation which should have sufficient boldness, resolution, and foresight to acquire it.

Trusting in the efficiency of the interference of the state, Colbert endeavored to accomplish his great plans of colonization by the organization of companies which obtained trade monopolies, received governmental aid, and were hampered by governmental supervision. Companies were organized to trade in the East and the West Indies, in Senegal and Madagascar. None of them prospered. The monopolies which they possessed were fatal to the growth of population, which alone could insure a permanent and a profitable trade. The colonists were strictly enjoined to have no dealings with foreigners. Goods landed by them were confiscated. Those who traded with them could be banished.[1] The profits of trade were so

[1] *Lettres de Colbert*, t. iii. 398, 500. Colbert declares that

strictly guarded for the benefit of the monopolists that soon there were no profits to receive. The companies were harassed by the directions of an over-vigilant government. In remote parts of the world, among barbarous populations, they were required to administer their dominions by the same laws that were in force at Paris and Versailles. The home office wished its regulations followed implicitly among the Caribs of Martinique and the Malagasy of Madagascar. A settler by the Bay of Bengal could marry no wife but a member of the Catholic Apostolic Church. The planter in the West Indies had to raise and prepare his sugar to comply with usages established at Bordeaux. Girls were sent out to become wives of the colonists, and Colbert wrote the governor that they must all be married within fifteen days at latest.[1] Other directions were equally peremptory and less judicious. The companies fared like children who are restrained from exercise for fear of harm. They grew up weakly, and an early death terminated a sickly existence. They died of over-protection. All of the companies organized by Colbert liquidated at a loss, and the most of them within a few years. Of the colonies, Canada, which had been to a considerable extent let alone, gained the most in population. Still, the efforts of Colbert turned the attention of France to the colonies that she might build up, and to the foreign possessions which she might acquire. Had his example been followed, the French navy might have rivaled

nothing was of so much importance as the enforcement of this regulation.

[1] Much information about the career of these companies will be found in the correspondence of Colbert ; also, in the various edicts by which they were organized and directed.

that of England. Had Pitt ruled France in the eighteenth century, instead of Louis XV. and Mme. de Pompadour, she might have become the great colonial power of Europe, and the hopes of Richelieu and Colbert would have been fulfilled.

In many other respects Colbert endeavored to improve the condition of the country. He did much, and left much undone. Many of the annoying internal tolls were abolished, but many remained. An edict abolishing every toll on road or river in the interior of France would have increased the trade and wealth of that country more than all Colbert's efforts during twenty years. Some of those who had fraudulently withdrawn their property from the taille were again subject to it, but the nobility still enjoyed exemption from this tax. Colbert saw the advantages of a uniform system of weights and measures.[1] But it is often easier to change the nature of a government than to alter the system by which the butcher shall weigh his meat or the baker measure his flour, and the proposed reform was not executed. It may be said that measures such as these, certainly those which would have deprived the nobility of their feudal privileges and have exposed them to the same taxation as the vulgar, would have been equivalent to a revolution in the social system. This is perhaps so. It does not follow that they could not have been effected without resistance. In 1789, privileges and prerogatives fell as softly as autumn leaves. Uniform systems of law and of weights and measures, the abolition of immunities from taxation and of the privileges of trade organizations, all the changes which had long been declared too hazardous to attempt, were adopted and en-

[1] *Discours pour le conseil*, October, 1665.

forced as easily as a law for reclaiming swamp lands. When the advantages of a reform can be clearly seen, it is usually time for its adoption. The difficulties of enforcement are generally imaginary. The surest way to prepare for a reform is to adopt it.

Colbert's career became more difficult towards its close. Louvois appealed to the love of military glory, which was Louis's strongest passion, and his counsels became more acceptable than those of the man of peace. The cost of war, the expense of buildings and of the splendor in which the king delighted, overthrew the equilibrium of the budget which Colbert had labored so diligently to obtain. But though Louis was less inclined to adopt his counsels, he always regarded the minister with favor.[1] Colbert died in 1683, in possession of the offices and dignities which he had so long held. To the people of France he had for many years seemed a man ingenious in creating new devices for taxation. His efforts at increasing their prosperity had failed, and he was regarded with hatred. Guards had to be stationed along the road from his house to the church to keep the mob from tearing to pieces the body of the minister who had become odious to them.[2]

When in Mazarin's employ, Colbert had shown zeal for his own interests, as well as for those of his master. He had asked for a great deal, and received

[1] Louis wrote to Seignelay, when Colbert was dying: "I hope that God will not take him from this world, where he is so needed. I hope it with all my heart, from the particular friendship I have for him and all his family." The statements of the Venetian ambassador and others, that Colbert before his death had entirely lost the favor of the king, I do not think are correct.

[2] *Lettres de la Princesse Palatine*, September 29, 1683: *Relazioni dagli Ambasciatori Veneti.*

much. To a still larger extent he enjoyed the benefactions of the king. Louis was always willing to reward his servants, and Colbert was equally willing to receive. His family was established among the great nobility. Two of his daughters married dukes. His son succeeded him in the navy department. The fortune which he left was estimated at 10,000,000 livres, as much as $10,000,000 now. He claimed that he made every sou of it honestly, from the lawful perquisites of the offices he held, and from the gifts which he had received from the king. This was undoubtedly true. To be honest was rare, to be disinterested was unknown.

CHAPTER V.

LOUIS THE GREAT.

When the title of "the Great" was conferred upon Louis XIV. by the authorities of Paris in 1680, it was deemed well deserved alike by his subjects, by Europe, and by himself. Since the Emperor Charles V., no sovereign had possessed such power or excited such apprehension. The attention of every other European court was riveted on Versailles. Each morning the princes of the empire, the grandees of Spain, the merchants of Holland, and the cardinals of Rome asked eagerly for the latest news from the king of France. The dangers to be feared from his ambition, and the magnificence which characterized his life, were discussed in every council chamber, in every coffee-house, in every barber-shop in Europe. No statesman passed a day without considering the last rumor as to the purposes of the great king, whether he was contemplating the acquisition of a new province, or was content to be coquetting with a new mistress.

In war his career had been one of unbroken success. France had resisted the half of Europe in arms, and had emerged from the struggle with her territories largely increased. In the campaign of 1678, three hundred thousand men had marched under the *fleurs de lis*. No civilized nation had sent such forces

into the field since the legions of Rome contended by the banks of the Euphrates and the Danube.

The peaceful achievements of the king excited as much admiration as his victories in war. The splendor and the costliness of the buildings erected at Paris, Marly, and Versailles exceeded anything that the world had seen since the great constructions of the Roman emperors. From the beauty and the number of the women whom Louis favored with his affection, the wealth which he squandered upon them, the palaces which he erected for them, his fame for a prodigal and varied gallantry rivaled that of the caliph Haroun al Raschid. The fervor of his faith, the regularity of his devotions, his abhorrence of heresy and his efforts for its destruction, made him equally renowned for piety, and he could fitly bear the title of Most Christian King, with which the papacy had honored the throne of France. His court was far more splendid than that of any other European monarch, and there gathered an aristocracy which had once been powerful and independent, but which was now content to bask in the royal presence, and to be obscured by the glory of the central sun. The descendants of nobles who had led armies in the crusades and the English wars, and who had ruled provinces almost as independent sovereigns, sought only the royal smile; they counted their success in life by the extent of their intimacy with the king; from him, and from him alone, they obtained the offices which increased their dignity, and the pensions which increased their wealth.

Many feudal privileges of the nobility continued until the Revolution, and they became the more odious because the theory of the protection of the weak by

the strong, on which they were based, had long become an extinct tradition. But the feudal aristocracy of France, so far as its relations with the sovereign were concerned, ceased to exist during the reign of Louis XIV. An order of nobility became a body of courtiers. It was mainly to the increased power of the central government that this result was due, but the character of the king was not without its influence. He wished his court splendid, and he wished it to contain all those who were illustrious from birth or fortune. No one could hope for favor or promotion unless his face was often seen at Versailles. No skill in the field, no services in administration, could atone for the neglect to pay to the sovereign the homage of personal attendance. Louis could not express his disfavor of any one more clearly than when he said, "I do not see him often at court."

The life at Versailles combined magnificence with pleasure. Ordinarily there were plays and operas three times a week, and a ball every Saturday. When there was no special entertainment, there was still much to amuse and delight. Everybody of rank was found in the great halls and chambers of the palace. These were adorned with fine paintings, they were brilliantly lighted, they were filled with well-bred people. The richness and variety of the dresses of both sexes furnished a scene which in our day can nowhere be found. In one room musicians sang for those who wished to listen, in another the violins played for those who preferred to dance. The chambers where there were games of cards were always the most frequented. The king played somewhat, though with moderation, losing his money as a king should. But he liked to see the stakes high, and his courtiers,

men and women alike, were willing to gratify him. Great sums were constantly wagered. Good players became wealthy at the royal tables, and bad players there lost great estates. In another hall were the billiard tables. Louis was fond of billiards, and played well. When Chamillart was made comptroller general, it was said that he owed the foundation of his fortunes to the skill by which he made it difficult for the king to beat him, and the judgment by which he did not render it impossible.[1] In another hall a sumptuous repast was always ready. There was plenty of good wine, but no one drank to excess, for dissipation in that form did not accord with the dignity of the king or the habits of the people.

No court at that time, perhaps no court at any time, could show such a combination of luxury, elaborate etiquette, and polished good-breeding. The courtiers pleased Louis best who displayed a lavish extravagance in their dress and in their establishments. Sometimes he uttered a word of caution on the reckless expenditure of his attendants, but those who disregarded it were the better liked. When the Duke of Burgundy was married, a nobleman of modest tastes spent the equivalent of $20,000 for clothes for himself and his wife, in which to appear at the festivities.[2]

The ordinary course of amusements was occasionally varied by festivities of special magnificence. The *carrousels* furnished an opportunity for the young noblemen to display their address, their ingenuity, and their splendor. At one of them the civil wars of Granada were represented, at another the strife between the Saracens and the Paladins of Charlemagne.

[1] *Mém. de Sourches*, i. 154 ; *Mém. de St. Simon*, ii. 231.

[2] *Mém. de St. Simon*, i. 484.

The dresses were costly and gorgeous. The jousting and the mimic contests exhibited the skill of a nobility which was never lacking in any grace, and never recreant where courage was required. The chronicles of the court devote much more space to the description of these *carrousels* than to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and they undoubtedly excited much more interest.

The reviews of the army were conducted on a still more imposing scale. They combined all that was most gratifying to the tastes of the king. At Compiègne, 60,000 men marched and countermarched in his presence, fought mimic battles, and captured imaginary cities. The discipline of the men, the magnificent uniforms of the officers, the prodigal entertainments in which a colonel or a general spent the income of a year in the hospitality of a day, astounded the world and delighted the sovereign.

The Marshal of Boufflers had tables spread by day and night, on which were found the choicest wines and the rarest dishes; over four hundred servants cared with equal attention for all visitors, whether of high or low degree. Forty horses were needed to draw the supplies of fruit and vegetables. Special agents at Brussels gave their whole time to procuring sufficient sturgeon and salmon. A thousand bottles of wine were drunk every day at his headquarters.[1] Houses were erected for his guests, all furnished and equipped like the most superb palaces at Paris. A fortune was wasted in the lavish entertainment of three weeks.

Distinctions which seem trivial now were the things for which men intrigued and toiled during Louis's

[1] Mercure, September, 1698, *Gazette d'Amsterdam.*

reign, as the rewards of a lifetime. The right to be admitted to the king's levée when the curtains around his bed were first drawn back, instead of when he was already arrayed in his *robe de chambre*, conferred upon those entitled to it a dignity which could not be over-estimated. Louis designed a sort of close-fitting coat, which could be worn only by those receiving special permission; and the privilege of arraying one's self in an ugly jacket of red and blue was hankered after by the greatest nobles of France. The man to whom the monarch spoke a friendly word, or granted a lengthy interview, became, for the time at least, a personage of distinction. The courtier whom he directed to hold the candle as he retired was an object of envy to all the world.

Such a life affected the character and the position of the French aristocracy. To be away from the presence of the king was to be in exile. The monarch's displeasure was often manifested by a sentence which banished the offender, and ordered him to retire to his estates. To exchange a scene of tedious pomp and constant intrigue for some ancient chateau surrounded by parks and forests, and by all the beauty of the country in France, might not seem a severe penalty, but it was deemed a punishment almost too grievous to be borne. Mme. de St. Géran was ordered to leave the court, and she at once retired into a convent. Her conduct was much approved. When she had displeased the king, it was fitting that she should abandon the world and seek the seclusion of a religious retreat; who fell from all she knew of earthly bliss could turn her thoughts only to heaven. After years of exile the Marquis of Vardes was allowed to return to Versailles. Perhaps with the

purpose of delicate flattery, he reappeared in the dress which had been in vogue long before, and the younger courtiers sneered at his attire. "When banished from your Majesty," said the marquis, "one is not only unhappy, but one is ridiculous."

Absorbed in the life of the court, a nobleman lost all interest in local questions; he became a stranger to his tenantry. Their only relations with him were when his bailiff came to extract the last sou of rent; when his deer trampled down their crops, or his pigeons ate up their grain. The nobility thus became practically non-resident; and non-resident owners of land are alike injurious and odious to the community. The charmed existence at Versailles, gorgeous fêtes, costly dress, profuse living, and high play were a heavy drain upon those who there passed most of their lives. Improvidence in money matters was characteristic of the French nobleman. He watched with calmness the loss of a fortune by the turn of a card. Though his estates might be mortgaged beyond their value, he continued with unconcern a career of prodigal dissipation. The cost of such modes of life had to be supplied in some way, and this could only be done by the crown. Pensions were bestowed freely and were spent lavishly. A nobility which lived on pensions was sure to be subservient, and a people which had to pay them was sure to become discontented.

The embassies which came from distant countries to offer their homage to Louis XIV. added to the lustre of his name, and attracted an amount of attention out of proportion to their importance. In 1685, some Muscovite ambassadors presented themselves at the court. Russia then seemed to the French a more remote and barbarous country than Corea does now. Her repre-

sentatives showed by their conduct how much more closely they were allied with Eastern than with Western civilization. When they were presented to the king, they threw themselves upon the ground with their faces down, after the Oriental custom, and this mute adoration was not unacceptable. There was some question as to their official character; their appearance was poor and their credentials were uncertain; but they were good enough ambassadors to gratify the vanity of the king.[1]

The embassy from Siam received still more attention. Louis had sent a representative to Siam, accompanied by one of the most worldly and frivolous of French abbés, who was to undertake the conversion of the Siamese king. That sovereign showed little desire to become a Christian, even under such tuition, but he sent ambassadors to pay his respects to the king of France. Innumerable crowds watched their entry into Paris, and at Versailles everything was done to impress the strangers from the remote East with the magnificence of the Western monarch. Apparently these efforts were successful. When the ambassadors were received at court, they fell upon their knees and gazed long and with intense interest upon the king. In their address they assured him that their lives would be too short to declare their admiration, and that special embassies to the allies of Siam would proclaim throughout all the East, and for all time, the incomparable virtues of Louis the Great.[2]

The king's taste for building was only exceeded by his taste for war, and he spent enormous sums on the palaces which he constructed and adorned. They do

[1] *Mém. de Sourches*, i. 224.

[2] *Ib.*, ii. 9, 10; Dangeau, i. 370 *et passim*; Abbé de Choisy,

not represent the highest order of architecture, but the reign of Louis XIV. did much for the improvement of Paris, and has left memorials of which the French may still be justly proud. The Hôtel des Invalides was constructed by Louis's order, under the supervision of Colbert. The king contributed one half towards the expense of the canal of Languedoc, which was one of the greatest and most beneficial achievements of his reign. The completion of the Louvre also excited the special interest of Colbert. His zeal in building was not, however, accompanied by equally good taste. The heavy and grandiose architecture which pleased the master pleased the man. He desired that Bernini should prepare plans for the Louvre, and he declared that the rare productions of the Italian's genius made him the admiration of the world.[1] Bernini visited Paris, that he might see those portions of the building already constructed, and the site for the new additions. He was received with the greatest honors. The officers of the cities through which he passed presented their respects. Special messengers were sent to see that ice was provided to cool his wine wherever he deigned to stop. But, fortunately, his plans were not accepted. Paris has suffered from wars, revolutions, and communes, but she was saved from Bernini. Colbert declared that his

614. However Oriental in its effusion, the address of the ambassadors was prepared for them by the abbé. It is to be feared that much of the inspiration of these famous embassies to Louis XIV. came from his own subjects. They knew the pleasure that such ceremonials gave him, and his vanity was too much gratified at receiving delegations from the uttermost parts of the earth to harbor suspicions as to who had suggested their coming.

[1] Colbert to Bernini, March, 1664.

plans equaled the works of the Greeks and Romans in grandeur and majesty, and were worthy of the great king for whom they were designed. With all this grandeur, there were too many open courts and galleries; there were great halls for plays and feasts, but no preparations for a climate where it rained most of the time, and where one had to sit by the fire from October to May.[1] Bernini returned to Rome, and was consoled by a pension. The eastern end of the Louvre, which faces the Church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, was constructed according to the plans of Claude Perrault. It is dignified and imposing, and if less pleasing than the portions of the Louvre erected by Francis I. and Catharine de Medici, it is the most satisfactory of the structures which posterity owes to Louis XIV.

Paris was beautified in many ways during this reign. Parks were laid out; streets were broadened and made more regular; they were better lighted and better cleaned. The city was still far removed from the elegance of the present, but in many parts one was less offended by filth by day, and was in less danger of being garroted in the darkness by night. On the other hand, this improvement was accomplished at the sacrifice of some of the beauty and picturesqueness of old Paris. A distaste for mediæval squalor was unfortunately accompanied by a distaste for mediæval architecture. Gothic towers and gables fell, to be replaced by Mansard roofs.

The great constructions at Versailles were of the most interest to the king, and with them he is most closely identified. Versailles was little more than a shooting-box when Louis began to enlarge and beau-

[1] *Lettres de Colbert*, v. 247, 269 *et pas.*; *Mém. de Charles Perrault.*

tify it. The constantly increasing sums which he there expended drew frequent remonstrances from Colbert. He besought the king to fix a sum which should not be exceeded on any pretext. If Louis would reduce his expenditures for buildings to 3,000,000 livres, he wrote him in 1670, and would bring his entire expenses down to 60,000,000, he could promise him abundance of money all his days, while his enemies would be reduced to need.[1]

With equal solicitude he desired that the king should take more interest in the Louvre and less in Versailles. "What a pity," he cried, "that the greatest and most virtuous of kings should be measured by the scale of Versailles, and yet there is reason to apprehend this misfortune."[2] His prophecy was fulfilled. The character of Louis XIV. is symbolized in stone and mortar by the palace he there erected. Whoever cares to gain a just conception of what manner of man Louis XIV. was, cannot do better than to stroll through the vast and tasteless gardens, where even nature ceases to be beautiful, and look upon the great row of monstrous buildings which close the view. The palace resembles its master; it is grandiose, commonplace, and dull. It was the place which, of all the world, Louis XIV. most loved. He was not fond of Paris; the turbulence of the great city was distasteful to him, and years sometimes passed without his entering its walls; but he stood by the fountain of Diana and looked upon the façade extending for

[1] *Lettres de Colbert*, vii. 253–255. "J'oserois, dis-je, répondre à votre majesté, qu'elle verra la mesme abondance pendant toute sa vie." This sum, he added, was a quarter more than Louis XIII. ever spent, even when he had five armies in the field.

[2] Colbert to Louis, September 28, 1665.

a quarter of a mile, and his soul was content.[1] Versailles excited the wonder and delight of contemporaries, and it is still imposing to the multitude. It has tended to vulgarize the conceptions both of architecture and of royalty.

The choice of the site was singularly unfortunate. In the vicinity of Paris there is a country of great beauty, richly wooded, diversified by the windings of the Seine, and with hills and banks commanding extensive and delightful views. At St. Germain, where Louis was born, the beauty of the situation and the magnificence of the view could hardly be excelled. But the king had no love for nature; he preferred the prospect of clipped evergreens and spouting fountains to that of the Seine winding among primeval forests. Versailles was low, flat, sandy, and without either wood or water, and he found it the locality most agreeable to his tastes. It was necessary to procure water elsewhere, and it was brought from the Seine at Marly. Later, the idea was formed of diverting the course of the Eure, and carrying it a distance of fifty miles to Versailles. An aqueduct was to be constructed, some of the arches of which were to be higher than the towers of Notre Dame. Louvois encouraged this undertaking, — one sufficiently costly and useless to have pleased the Persian Darius. Thirty thousand soldiers were set to work at digging the new bed for the river. The difficulties were enormous; the excavations caused sickness, and the mortality among the soldiers was frightful. At the expiration of three years, after a great waste of life and money, the scheme was abandoned.

The amount of money spent at Versailles was large,

[1] *Mém. de Sourches*, i. 56.

yet it was very much less than has often been stated.[1] The discovery of the building accounts renders it possible to ascertain the cost with considerable accuracy. The whole amount expended for the palace at Versailles, including its accessories, decorations, and works of art, was about 116,000,000 livres. That sum would represent in equivalent value as many dollars now, or about 24,000,000 pounds.[2] Considering the size of the buildings and the splendor of the furniture and the decorations, the cost was not excessive. Most of the work was done under the supervision of Colbert or of Louvois. No contractors were allowed to batten on the public treasury, and no political necessity compelled the employment of useless laborers at exorbitant wages.

While the palaces which Louis built were thought to rival the great constructions of Greece and Rome, it was as a patron of literature that he seemed still more illustrious. Even now the age of Louis XIV. is compared with that of Augustus at Rome, and of

[1] For example, Voltaire estimated the expense of Versailles at 500,000,000 livres, Mirabeau at twice that sum, and Volney at 4,600,000,000. Such figures have no basis but an excited imagination.

[2] This includes the amounts spent at the Trianon, and the cost of the various schemes for bringing water to Versailles. The long period covered by the work, and the multiplicity of objects purchased, make it impossible to ascertain the exact figures. It is also unimportant. See *Comptes des batiments du roi*, from 1660 to 1695, published in three volumes. The remaining accounts are still in MSS. at the Bib. Nat. See, also, *Etats au vrai de toutes les sommes employées par Louis XIV.*, etc., by Eckard, and the works of Taschereau and others on the same subject. The largest sum spent in any one year was about 11,000,000 livres in 1685, under the superintendence of Louvois. Louvois stimulated the zeal of the king for extravagant building, while Colbert, with small success, endeavored to restrain it.

Elizabeth in England. Inheriting the throne at the age of four, Louis was king of France for seventy-two years. That long period covers more or less of the career of all the great French authors of the seventeenth century. But if we are to judge simply by the eminence of the men who live during a reign, the sixty years that Louis XV. occupied the throne were still more important in literature, science, and thought. If, instead of enumerating the authors who wrote during the lifetime of Louis XIV., we consider how far they were influenced by the spirit of his administration, there seems little reason to claim that benefits to literature should atone for errors in politics. It was not until 1661 that Louis XIV. became anything more than a nominal king. Most of the illustrious French writers of the seventeenth century were then at the zenith of their fame; their genius had not been fostered by the luxurious living and narrow thinking of a court, but by the turbulence and the license of the Fronde; they had drawn inspiration from the government of Richelieu and the career of Gustavus Adolphus; they had felt the influence of the struggle for freedom in thought and expression which had produced in the sixteenth century a Rabelais and a Montaigne.

In 1661, Descartes had been dead for eleven years.[1] Pascal had ceased to write. Corneille had published his great works, and was to create nothing more which should add to his reputation. Molière was a man of almost forty; he had produced some of his famous

[1] Louis prohibited teaching the philosophy of Descartes. — *Cor. Adm.*, iv. 608, 1685. Such a prohibition was characteristic of a reign, the fanatical admirers of which claim Descartes as one of its glories.

plays, and in his career as a wandering actor he had observed the other types of character which he was to immortalize. La Fontaine had reached the same age as Molière, and his writings were so little to the royal taste that he was over sixty before Louis would allow the Academy to choose him as a member. Rochefoucauld belongs to the period of the Fronde. St. Simon, the most bitter and the most brilliant of all the writers of memoirs, gives expression to the political reaction which followed the death of Louis XIV.

The careers of La Bruyère and Le Sage, of Boileau and Mme. de Sévigné, may justly be reckoned in the age of Louis XIV.; but it would be difficult to discover, in the writings of either of the two first named, any fruits of royal patronage, or any effects of royal influence. The only great writers who were patronized by the court, and whose works seem to reflect the stately life of the period, are Racine and the group of famous French preachers. Certainly it says much for the dignified and well-balanced pomp of existence at the court of Louis XIV. that we can feel the affinity between it and tragedies like "Andromaque" and "Phèdre," or funeral orations like those of Bossuet and Massillon. The justness of expression, the polished diction, the perfect good taste of these productions harmonize with the traditions, the customs, the instincts of the age to which they belong. They display its decorous elegance; it may perhaps be said that they are characterized by its limitations. Racine could find his place in the court of Louis XIV., but it is certain that there would have been no room there for a Shakespeare.

If we consider the assistance which was given directly to men of letters, we shall find good reason for

understanding why Louis should have been so loudly proclaimed as a patron of literature, and for doubting the value of the patronage. Soon after the king became his own master, he began giving pensions to authors, and the amounts thus bestowed represented annually a considerable sum.

Literature rarely profits from the bounty of the great. These literary pensions were little more than a gigantic scheme of advertising; they find their analogies in the subsidies to the press paid by modern governments; they suggest the idea that great kings may have their virtues made illustrious by processes not wholly unlike those which now familiarize the world with the panaceas of quacks. "The king," wrote Colbert, "will cultivate the arts with the more zeal, because they will perpetuate the memory of his great and glorious achievements."[1] Pensions were granted both to French and to foreign writers, with careful attention to their use where they would do the most good.[2] Chapelain had charge of the literary bureau, and his letters to Colbert, extending over eleven years, are a curious chapter in the encouragement of literature by royalty. The skill with which the money was spent so as to have Louis's praises sounded in every land and language shows that in the art of puffing no great progress has been made during two hundred years. Writers of contemporary history and authorities on questions of international law were favorably regarded, and poets who understood the art of praise were sure not to be forgotten. Colbert was delighted at the results that might be expected from such patronage. "These great men," he writes, speaking of those who had received pensions,

[1] *Lettres de Colbert*, v. 331.

[2] *Lettres, Instructions, etc., de Colbert*, t. v. 587-650.

"charmed at such protection, have formed the idea of a history of the king in every fashion; a history of his reign to be told in French and in Latin, in poetry and in panegyrics, and also of his private life, where shall be seen all the workings of his mind, all that he has said and done."[1] The only histories wanted were those which were profuse in adulation. A Florentine, who claimed that he excelled even the ancients in the art of flattery, asked for data from which he could prepare a panegyric of the king. The matter was referred to Colbert to consider with the care that befitted its importance.[2] Pellisson was selected to write a history of Louis. He laid down the rules which should govern his conduct. "The king must be praised everywhere, but without appearance. One must not give his acts the epithets they deserve, but draw these from the mouth of the reader by the recital of the achievements. Plutarch praised Alexander thus, and he was well praised." "It is to be hoped," he adds, "that his Majesty will agree to this plan, but he must not seem to have known of it, much less to have commanded it."[3]

The manner in which the objects of the royal bounty are described in the official reports of the moneys paid them is often in curious contrast with the judgments of posterity. To Chapelain, "illustrious in poetry," was given 3,000 livres; to Carlo Dati, the Florentine panegyrist, 1,200; to Mézeray, "for his profound knowledge of history," 4,000. On the other hand, Molière received 1,000, and Racine 600.[4]

[1] *Lettres de Colbert*, ii. 61.

[2] Chapelain to Colbert, April 5, 1666.

[3] Pellisson to Colbert, 1671.

[4] Racine's pension was increased to 1,500 livres. Molière never received over 1,000.

The literature that was evolved by such encouragement was of the character that we might expect. One man wrote a Latin poem of twelve hundred verses on the birth of the dauphin. A flood of poetry followed the king's recovery from a trifling illness, — among others, writes Chapelain, "a French ode by a young man named Racine," which was re-polished under Chapelain's advice, and the author received a pension.[1] "I have a Latin poem," he writes again, "of over two hundred verses, very fine, and entirely filled with the praises of his Majesty." A history of the reign was prepared from the medals which had been struck of Louis's achievements. A copy was sent to the most important officials, with a circular stating that this was a book that every public man should always have in his hands, or on his table.[2]

Yet the rigor of the censorship was never more severe than at this era. The historian who dared to tell the truth; the patriot who advanced any plan for public reformation which differed from the accepted policy; the writer who expressed any views in politics, religion, or philosophy which were distasteful to the king, or who failed to bestow the proper amount of adulation, — received no pension: he had his book published anonymously in Holland, and was fortunate if he did not find himself in the Bastille for his pains. The intellectual torpor of the last twenty years of the reign was the natural result of such methods, and it is the best proof that literature was harmed more than helped by the patronage of Louis XIV. Indeed, this seems to have been fatal to the development of literary or of military genius. Great generals and great

[1] Chapelain to Colbert, June 23, 1663.

[2] *Circulaire du Comte de Pontchartrain*, March 8, 1702.

writers were in their full vigor when Louis assumed power. Turenne and Condé were ready to fight his battles, Molière and Racine were prepared to make his theatres famous. But the intellectual atmosphere ceased to be favorable for the growth of great men. Those whose characters had been formed under Richelieu and the Fronde died and left no successors. The last years of Louis's reign were as poor in literature as they were in military achievement.

One could not give a just idea of the great king, in the period of his highest glory, without some reference to the many and beautiful women who were the objects of his affection, whose varying favor was regarded at the court as the most important question of the day, and was not viewed with indifference even by foreign nations. Any great detail on this subject is, however, neither edifying, nor of advantage to posterity. In such matters Louis XIV. was not more nor less an offender than almost all kings of France, and most kings of every nation. He would be less subject to censure, if his rôle as a Lothario had not been accentuated by his career as a Diocletian. Royalty has often proved a formidable enemy to female virtue, and Louis was in every way fitted to please. Apart from the halo which encircled him as a king and a conqueror, his person was handsome and imposing. He expressed himself always with justness, and often with felicity. He was a master of that courteous deference to ladies which was the more agreeable when practiced by a great monarch. Such a man would have been a dangerous admirer though he had not been a sovereign; if he had not been the king, he would still have been the most elegant gentleman of the court.

Louis's relations with his mistresses were attended

with the same publicity as the other actions of his life. Virtue was not paid the tribute of even the pretense of secrecy. The king's conduct was marked also by the same curious lack of appreciation of others' feelings that he always manifested. The queen was a woman of small intelligence, but she was not destitute of the natural feelings of a wife, and Louis regarded her, if not with affection, at least with friendliness. Yet, in the solemn processions through conquered towns, she was obliged to drive in the same carriage with La Vallière and Montespan, the two favorites at that period, and the public jested about the three queens. Louis XIV. was the last man to have offered an affront to his wife, or to have allowed it from others, but he was unconscious of the nature of his act. Mistresses as well as wife shared the glory of belonging to him; the world was entitled to see them, as it was entitled to see all the acts of the sun of royalty, from its rising to its going down. That there could be any feeling of bitterness, any sense that he had violated another's rights or outraged another's position, no more occurred to his mind than such an idea occurs to the Great Turk when he surveys his harem.

The career of the woman, the widow of a comic poet of inferior position, who succeeded the descendant of Charles V. as wife of the most powerful king in Europe, excites more curiosity than that of dissolute beauties like Montespan and Fontanges. "Her position is unique in the world," wrote Mme. de Sévigné; "no one ever has or ever will occupy another like it."[1] This is entirely true, and it is equally true that while the influence of Mme. de Maintenon in French

[1] *Lettres*, vii. 287.

history has been grossly exaggerated, she was an important factor in the latter years of Louis's reign.

Her early life is well known. The daughter of a Huguenot gentleman of dissolute conduct and reduced fortune, she was married when a young girl to the poet Scarron. He surrounded her with companions of abundant wit and scanty morals, and left her a widow, young, charming, and poor. Her attractive manners gained her friends; a few years later she was appointed governess to the bastard children of Mme. de Montespan by Louis XIV., and this humble position proved the foundation of her extraordinary fortune. As the result of the life she had led, we might expect to find a person vivacious and attractive, but of fluctuating morals, and to whom it would seem the height of human felicity to be the mistress of a king. Mme. de Maintenon shows how far inborn character remains unaffected by its environment. She had already espoused two religions; she had seen the phases of poverty, need, and shift. As a child, she had tended the turkeys in her aunt's chicken yard.[1] She had married an elderly cripple, because he offered to furnish her a home.[2] She had been the friend of Ninon, the most famous of courtesans; she had been surrounded by men and women to whom religion was a tradition and virtue a jest. She now took charge of the fruits of what was justly stigmatized as a double adultery; her patron was the mistress, and her protector was the lover. Yet no woman brought up in the retirement of a province,

[1] *Conseils aux Demoiselles*, t. i. 98.

[2] It is said that Scarron offered either to marry her or to provide for her in a convent. She chose marriage, though it was no more than a form.

and surrounded only by priests and social recluses, was ever more steadfast to the principles of religion and discreet conduct. No one ever realized more thoroughly that virtue is the best policy. No one was ever more resolved to run no risk of eternal damnation for the sake of transient pleasures. She believed the doctrine, and her conduct was consistent with her belief. She was fortunate enough to be lacking in human passion, and to be provided in the highest degree with good judgment and common sense. She could say with truth, "I was a good child, and by irreproachable conduct I attracted the praise of every one."[1] And therefore it was that, not only to her dear pupils at St. Cyr, but to all others, she became the model of the little girl who was always good, and was rewarded by having a great king come and marry her; of the woman who always said wise things and never did foolish ones, and who secured for herself the very best to be had in this world and the next.

The character and influence of Mme. de Maintenon have been subjected to grave misconstruction, as the result of curious literary forgeries. An ingenious writer in the last century published what purported to be her correspondence, in which was contained much that she did write and much that she did not. By far the most interesting letters, those that seemed to throw light on great historical problems, to epitomize with felicity her own views and conduct, in her varied career, were the invention of an editor who wished to interest and amuse his public. The sentence so often quoted, "I sent him away always despondent and never despairing," is in one of these, and was no more uttered by the supposed author than was the still

[1] *Lettres édifiantes*, v. 926.

more famous saying constantly attributed to Louis XIV., "L'Etat, c'est moi." Critical examination shows us that a very large proportion of the famous remarks of great men were afterwards invented for them by little men. The penny-a-liner indites the apothegm which the monarch should have uttered.[1] A century later, the forgeries of La Beaumelle have been exposed; the character of Mme. de Maintenon becomes more commonplace, and we can see clearly what manner of person she was. We see a woman who governed her steps, not with a deep and subtle policy, but with a judgment of uncommon clearness; who was sincerely anxious for the king's salvation, and still more anxious for her own; and to whom politics were of very much less interest than her relations with her confessor, or the progress of the school at St. Cyr.

In assuming the charge of the king's illegitimate children, Mme. de Maintenon might seem to countenance the immoral life which he was leading, and she exposed herself to the perils of an existence spent in the midst of a licentious court. On the other hand, her position brought her into intimate relations with the king, and might prove of great worldly advantage; she wished to retain it, and at the same time she wished to be safe. "I wish to insure my salvation," she wrote her confessor.[2] But she felt sure of herself

[1] These letters were published by La Beaumelle in 1752. The sagacity of Voltaire led him to doubt the authenticity of some of them, but they were generally accepted. The genuine letters of Mme. de Maintenon can be found in *Lettres historiques et édifiantes, Lettres sur l'éducation des filles et Conseils aux demoiselles*, 6 vols. in all; *Correspondance Générale*, edited by Lavallée, 4 vols. Many are still unpublished, and she burned her correspondence with the king.

[2] *Correspondance Générale*, i. 221, September 13, 1674.

even in the trying situation in which she was placed. "I know that I can insure my salvation here," she wrote again, and, with the spiritual complacence that is often found in those whose conception of religion is as narrow as hers, she added: "I go to mass once always, and twice on certain days; I think often of God, and dedicate my actions to Him. . . . I do not know my sins. I have good intentions and so I do little evil, and a desire to be esteemed puts me on my guard against my passions."[1] She charged her confessor with her salvation, and to him she appealed for constant direction. She wished to know whether she could without sin join the king in the repast he took at midnight on the close of fast days, and whether her stay at the court was involving her in any possible peril.[2] "Abandon yourself to your spiritual guide like a child," she wrote a friend; "do blindly what he says, without reasoning; that is the easiest and the safest way."[3] The easiest and the safest way was the one which she desired to follow. She remains an illustrious example of the great class who derive from the teachings of Christ nothing, save a desire to secure for themselves in the future an indefinite continuance of agreeable existence.

No one could remain in the midst of the intrigues and gallantries of the court of Louis XIV. without giving some attention to earthly interests. The position of Mme. de Maintenon seemed at first an obscure

[1] Maintenon to Abbé Gobelin, January 8, 1680. It is just to say that she accused herself later in the letter of being worldly-minded, and too free in her judgments; of wicked thoughts, though not of wicked deeds.

[2] *Correspondance Générale*, i. 207 *et passim.*

[3] *Ib.*, iii. 106.

one, but she soon became a personage who could not be lightly disregarded. Mme. de Montespan combined great beauty and much wit with a violent disposition, and she did not always spare her royal lover. On the other hand, Mme. de Maintenon's even disposition, her good judgment, and the remarkable charm of her conversation gradually attracted the king's attention. He was not a brilliant talker himself, but he could appreciate agreeable conversation. He found in Mme. de Maintenon a woman who always entertained him, and never annoyed him. She was three years older than he, but she was still attractive physically. We have no need of apocryphal letters to make us sure that Louis desired her for his mistress, and that she was steadfast in her refusal to occupy that position.

Instead of that, she undertook her great project of the king's reformation, that his life might no longer be a public scandal, and his eternal safety no longer be endangered. It is impossible that she could have dreamed of becoming Louis's wife as the result of such efforts. The queen was in good health, and bade fair to live as long as her husband, and even were she to die, the idea that Louis XIV. would wed one of his own subjects, and one of comparatively low degree, would have been regarded as the hallucination of a diseased mind. She probably hoped that with a reformed king she could enjoy a permanent favor that would be consistent with good morals, and moreover she had a natural taste for conversions. Later in life she undertook the conversion of relatives and Huguenots from love of the work; and to lead a great king back to the paths of virtue seemed to her an enterprise worthy of the loftiest Christian zeal. Bossuet was

engaged in the same endeavor, and with manly boldness he reproved the king for his immoral life. Louis was a good Catholic, a timorous Christian, and by no means a hardened sinner. As a result of such exhortations, the king resolved to renounce his evil ways, and amid tears and sobs he bade a solemn farewell to Mme. de Montespan. The favorite was furious at Bossuet. She offered bribes and she shed tears, but neither availed. She was still more indignant at the woman whom she had brought into intimate relations with the king, and who now used the influence she had gained for her benefactor's overthrow. It was in vain that Mme. de Maintenon declared that she was acting in the way to secure her friend's real happiness, both in this world and the next. Mme. de Montespan was a type of the ordinary royal favorite, greedy, intriguing, and ambitious, and tranquillity and a quiet conscience were not what she understood by happiness. The king himself proved a backslider. He was again ensnared by the charmer, and the only apparent results of the efforts for his reformation were that a few years later he had three mistresses instead of one.

Notwithstanding this ill success, Mme. de Maintenon retained her favor, and continued to work at the task which she had undertaken. Her early life had taught her the exceeding discomfort of scanty means. She now secured herself against any danger of such evils in the future. The king gave her the property of Maintenon; she discarded the plebeian name of Scarron, and took from her new estate the title by which she is known to history. Her efforts for the reformation of the king, after years of disappointment, were at last crowned with victory. Louis was becoming older, his religious instincts grew stronger

with years, he was devoting his energies to a great effort for the extirpation of Protestantism within his dominions, and his irregular life appeared the more unseemly in one who was loudly proclaimed as a champion of the faith.

Mme. de Montespan was again discarded. The other mistresses were abandoned, Louis became an exemplary husband, and Mme. de Maintenon held her position as a virtuous favorite and a Christian adviser. In July, 1683, the queen suddenly sickened and died. The relations of ten years had strengthened Mme. de Maintenon's hold upon the king's respect, and upon his affection. She had refused to be his mistress, and he now offered to make her his wife. The marriage was undoubtedly decided upon within a very few weeks after the queen's death. It was not often that Mme. de Maintenon's caution allowed any indiscreet remark to go on paper, but in September she wrote her confesssor, "I have need of strength to make a good use of my happiness."[1]

In the early part of 1684, Louis XIV. was privately married to Mme. de Maintenon, at midnight, in the presence of a few witnesses bound to secrecy. He was then forty-five and she was forty-eight. The marriage was never publicly acknowledged, but it was generally known that such a relation existed between the parties. At state ceremonials, Mme de Maintenon assumed only the rank to which she was nominally entitled, but in private, in her relations with the king, with his family, and with all others, her actual position was really, if not formally, acknowledged. She was the uncrowned queen.

Only an extraordinary woman could have tempted

[1] Mme. de Maintenon to Gobelin, September 20, 1683.

a man like Louis XIV. to contract a misalliance. It is still stronger proof of her qualities that the attachment, which she had thus aroused, never weakened. For thirty years she was Louis XIV.'s wife. During all that time he continued a devoted husband, and he never repented of his act. She was always able to amuse him, she never sought to push her influence too far, her conversation never became wearisome, her advice never became distasteful. When her own position is considered, and the man with whom she had to deal, such a result shows a rare combination of tact, judgment, intelligence, and the power to please.

Her influence on Louis's character was very considerable. Had it not been for Mme. de Maintenon, his licentious tastes would probably have continued their course until his advancing years might have been as indecent as those of his successor. It was due to her that the king's old age was dignified and seemly. Probably, however, it would have been better for France if the latter years of Louis XIV. had been devoted to Barrys and Pompadours instead of to piety and persecution.

The political influence of Mme. de Maintenon was considerable, but it has been much exaggerated. She took an active interest in church affairs and in the selection of bishops, but she was not the woman to instigate the king to any novel policy, either of intolerance or of ambition. She cared more about St. Cyr than she did about the Edict of Nantes or the Spanish Succession. She was called upon to give an opinion on both of those great questions; on both of them she advised wrong, but she advised as the king desired. In her efforts to reform Louis's conduct she appealed to his religious instincts, and unfortunately

the king's return to religion was accompanied by an increasing zeal for persecution. It is in this way only that Mme. de Maintenon can be regarded as largely responsible for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. She approved the act, and so did almost every Catholic in France, until experience had shown its disastrous results. She believed that those who died Huguenots were sure to be eternally punished. She was honest in her conviction, and it was natural and even praiseworthy that she should endeavor to save whom she could from such a fate. She was narrow in her faith, but she was sincere.

Mme. de Maintenon often wearied of the cares and trials of her great position, but she never wearied of the school of St. Cyr. Instituted by her to furnish an education for girls of good families but small means, — the class to which she had herself belonged, — she devoted to it a constant and a judicious supervision. The school became fashionable, and attracted the attention of the court. Racine wrote plays to be there acted; the characters were taken by the pupils, and excited more interest than any performance by the actors of the king's troupe. Mme. de Maintenon saw danger for the pupils from such publicity, and checked it. She was indeed an admirable directress, combining experience, judgment, and love for the work. So long as St. Cyr remained a school for girls, she continued its patron saint. The pupils were taught to regard her as the greatest and wisest of women. Her precepts were instilled into their minds; they studied her letters of advice as reverently as their books of devotion. To have doubted the wisdom of any precept which she had inculcated would have been like questioning the doctrines of

the church. A century later, a visitor observed at St. Cyr what would have best pleased the foundress, — angelic purity combined with Prussian discipline.

Never in modern times did the veneration and the love for a king approach so nearly to a form of worship as in the reign of Louis XIV. It was the religion of royalty. During the defeats and the misery of the war of the Spanish Succession, the monarch became odious to his subjects. He was an old man. The time comes with most great actors in public life when the world wearies of them, and so it was with him. But during the long years of his success and of his splendor, he was regarded with admiration and with affection by the most of his subjects, as well as by those who immediately surrounded him. The instinct of royalty was still strong in the French mind. The splendor of the reign was gratifying to the national pride. Louis believed that the rule of an absolute king was the best form of government, as sincerely as he believed in the doctrine of transubstantiation, and that also was the political creed of his people.[1] We may well include this reign within the period which led up to the Revolution, but as yet the feeling of reverence for the kingly office existed in unabated force. The doctrine of divine right found none to question it. The king was anointed with the sacred oil brought from heaven by a dove; he still touched the afflicted, and the divine grace imparted to him had the power to cure human ills. When Louis's grandson, the Duke of Burgundy, was born, the people were wild with joy. Bonfires blazed everywhere; in all the streets tables were set with meat and wine; passers-by were forced to stop and partake. In their

[1] *Œuvres de Louis XIV.*, i. 59.

delirium the courtiers even embraced the king, and he allowed such a familiarity amid the tumult of joy and excitement.[1]

As a mark of veneration for the great sovereign, statues were raised to him in almost every important city of France. The inscription on the statue at Poitiers declared Louis the Great to be the arbiter of war and peace, an immortal hero, the joy of the world. When the statue was unveiled, the orator explained the difference between the service due to God and to the king, and said that, though Louis the Great did not possess all the infinite perfections which pertained to the Creator alone, yet he had those qualities which most closely approached divinity, and which made him on earth its image and representative.[2] The oration was read by the king with approval, and he rewarded its author by appointing him an academician.[3] When the statue of Louis the Great was dedicated in the Place des Victoires at Paris, the governor of the city and the civic bodies marched about it with solemn prostrations, as was done before the statues of the deified emperors of Rome. Nothing was wanting, says a contemporary, but the incense and the sacrifices. The Duke of La Feuillade craved the privilege of burial directly under the image of his master, and even contemplated having lamps about it, which, like those in consecrated shrines, should burn night and day in token of perpetual adoration.[4] Another contemporary tells us that when certain persons passed through Louis's bed-chamber they made a deep obei-

[1] *Mém. de Choisy*, 594 ; *Mém. de Sourches*, i. 134.
[2] *Relation de ce qui s'est passé*, etc., August, 1687.
[3] *Mém. de Foucault*, Introduction, 39.
[4] *Mém. de Choisy*, 602 ; *Mém. de St. Simon*, ii. 216.

sance to the couch on which the monarch reposed at night.[1]

It was not unnatural that, surrounded by such perpetual incense, the king should feel that he was far removed from the ordinary lot of humanity. It was partly from this cause that Louis, who was a courteous man, so often seemed unfeeling in reference to others. The ladies of the court, and the members of his family, were obliged to follow him in wearisome journeys, no matter how wretched, or even how critical, might be their condition of health. He would enter the chamber of Mme. de Maintenon, who often suffered from fever or from headache, and who had the genuine French fear of a draught of air: at once the windows were thrown open, the musicians would play, the tumult of the court would begin.[2] Louis himself had perfect health. He did not intend to cause discomfort to the feelings of those around him, but he grew egoistical until he forgot that they had any feelings. The same failure to appreciate the world about him, or in any way to put himself in the position of others, led to some of his gravest political mistakes. He could not realize that affronted and despoiled nations would at last combine against him. He could not understand that a million of his subjects would not at his command abandon the beliefs of their ancestors, and commit their salvation to the Pope, whom their creed stigmatized as the Antichrist. With Louis XIV. as with Napoleon, egoism became a disease, and brought its own punishment.

[1] *Etat de la France en* 1697. This usage is also given by that worshiper of etiquette under Louis XV., the Duke of Luynes. — *Mém.*, ii. 290.

[2] *Mém. de St. Simon*, xii. 132.

The character of the sovereign, who is no longer called Louis the Great, seems trivial and commonplace when we compare him with a Cromwell or a Lincoln. Yet though the king had a narrow mind, a limited intelligence, and an excessive vanity, he still deserves our attention and our praise. If Louis does not rank high intellectually, he was a master of conduct, of the art which regulates the external relations of men. It is a phase of life too little valued in modern existence, but the good manners of which Louis XIV. gave an example to the world have their influence upon a man's character, as well as upon his genuflections. The king was courteous to all his fellow-men, no matter of what degree. If he claimed the deference that was his due, he was equally careful to give to others the courtesy that was their due. He paid to women the respect which is justly claimed as a proof of the advance which Western civilization has made over that of the East. Even the humblest female servant, when she met the king of France, received from him some mark of courteous recognition.[1] Louis was far removed from the vulgar and indolent voluptuaries who have so often filled an inherited throne. All his life he worked regularly and conscientiously. His judgment was not always accurate, but he exercised it according to such measure of light as he had. He had an elevated conception of the office which he held, and he endeavored to live up to his ideal. He attached perhaps an undue importance to external parade, but he regarded this as a responsibility as well as a pleasure. Once he was obliged to undergo a severe, and even a dangerous, operation.

[1] *Mém. de la Duchesse d'Orleans*, i. 39 ; *Mém. de St. Simon*, xii. 75.

Every day, no matter what inconvenience or pain it cost him, he had his regular audiences, and the life of the court went on around him as usual. "We are not private persons," he said; "we owe ourselves to the public."[1] If kings were raised far above ordinary humanity, they must show their superiority by indifference to the common ills and disappointments of men.

He knew how injurious was a slighting word when it fell from royal lips, and he rarely uttered one. He praised with a delicate grace; he did not often reprove, and when he did, it was with dignity and restraint. If, in his diplomatic relations, his faith was kept to the ear rather than to the sense, in his private life, when he gave his word he kept it. He rarely promised anything, but when a subject had once received the king's engagement he need disquiet himself no more. He disliked ill-mannered tricks; he disliked low amusements; he never lost his temper. He sought to give pleasure to all whom he met, and he was scrupulous not to cause pain or mortification, either by ill-nature or by inadvertence. He justly deserved to be called a gentleman.

If we consider the kingly office in its external qualities, in all that appeals to the popular imagination, that excites deference, that gratifies the taste for splendor and pomp, — and we should sadly misjudge human nature if we thought these things of small importance, — no man on the world's stage has better played the part of the king.

The dignity of such a life strengthens the character. The latter years of Louis's reign were full of disaster. His armies were unsuccessful; he was compelled to beg peace from enemies whom he had despised. He

[1] *Mém. de Sourches*, i. 464.

was mortified in his pride and wounded in his affections. He bore himself with fortitude; he accepted what was inevitable; he resisted manfully, so far as resistance was possible. Washington at Valley Forge was not a more illustrious example of the manner in which adversity should be faced. A great man Louis XIV. certainly was not, but we may justly call him a great king.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES.

1685.

THE reign of Louis XIV. is memorable for religious enterprises which seem inconsistent in their nature. It witnessed a systematic and long-continued oppression of the members of a faith which, for almost a century, had been protected by the law of the land. At the same time Louis was involved in constant controversy with the Holy See, and was more hated at Rome than any French king since Philip the Fair. It might seem that a monarch who persecuted his subjects for not acknowledging the papal authority, and himself refused obedience to the Holy Father, was probably a bigot from policy and an innovator from inclination. Such was not the fact. Louis was not one of those who have just religion enough to persecute. He was led on to his fatal policy towards his Protestant subjects by the combined influence of a narrow faith, a dull mind, and a stubborn pertinacity. The history of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes is a record of folly interspersed with cruelty. The lamentable failure of the effort to destroy dissent was at last acknowledged, even by those who had advised it. It injured France without extirpating heresy.

The growth of the Huguenot party in France led

to the civil wars of the sixteenth century. The adherents of the new faith increased rapidly in numbers; their creed was espoused by many of the most powerful nobles, until it seemed possible that Calvinism might become the dominant religion of the state, or at least might establish itself on terms of equality with the Catholic Church. But the mass of the population remained constant to the belief of their ancestors. The result of the civil wars was, on the whole, unfavorable to the Huguenots. Their position was weakened, also, by the massacre of St. Bartholomew. That butchery is now condemned by those of every creed; indirectly it injured more than it helped the church on whose behalf it was undertaken. Yet the massacre fulfilled the purpose of its instigators: it dealt to the Huguenot party a blow from which they never entirely recovered.

Henry of Navarre, a Huguenot by birth, became heir to the French crown. It was impossible, however, for him to become the king of France, with a recognized and peaceable title, unless he professed the Catholic faith. He attached slight importance to the distinctions between different beliefs, and it cost him little to abjure the Huguenot creed. It was the act of a statesman, and by it he secured peace and prosperity for his subjects, whether Catholic or Calvinist. While Henry yielded allegiance to the Pope, he was resolved to obtain all reasonable toleration for the associates of his early years, whose blood had been freely shed in his behalf. In 1598, he issued the famous Edict of Nantes. By this the Huguenots of France were placed in a position which, if it did not content the ambition of their leaders, was satisfactory to all who had been contending for freedom of

conscience and liberty to worship God. They were allowed the exercise of their religion in the places where it was, as matter of fact, established; they were eligible for any office; they enjoyed the same political rights as Catholics; courts composed of members of both creeds were established for the decision of disputes between those of different faiths. In no other country of Europe was such a measure of toleration extended to those who refused to adopt the religion of the state. It went beyond the desires of the Catholic party in France, and would only have been granted by a sovereign who, like Henry IV., was destitute of strong beliefs, and was more interested in secular than in religious politics. The Parliament of Paris was composed of magistrates of the highest rank, and fairly represented the educated and conservative classes. This body refused to register the edict, and ceased its resistance only upon the repeated orders of the king.

The death of Henry IV. was followed by new troubles for the Protestant party, but the responsibility of these must rest upon their own leaders. Later in the century, the Huguenots were treated by Louis XIV. with gross injustice, but the policy of Richelieu towards them strengthened France, without oppressing religion. Our sympathy for them when the victims of bigotry should not blind our judgment upon their conduct, when it was governed by ambition instead of by piety. During the long years of civil war, the Huguenots had been driven to adopt some form of organization as a protection against their enemies. The need for such an organization no longer existed. By the Edict of Nantes they had secured the right to worship God in peace according

to their own consciences. Having obtained this, they no longer required captains and armies for their protection, nor was there any reason why they should endeavor to become a distinct military and political body in the state. During the early part of the seventeenth century, however, the Huguenots continued to occupy a position for which there was no longer a justification. They divided the territory, where their members were numerous, into military departments, under the command of influential noblemen. Their general assembly assumed to declare war upon the government, and to levy taxes upon the faithful for its prosecution. The Huguenots allowed themselves to become the tools of ambitious leaders; to take part in insurrections that had no excuse but disappointed ambition, and no object but personal advancement. Richelieu resolved to destroy their political organization, and in this endeavor he acted in the true interest both of the French monarchy and of the Protestants themselves. He was successful in his attempt. The capture of La Rochelle marked the end of the Huguenot party as a disturbing element in France. To use a modern expression, they retired from politics. They mingled with the rest of the community as citizens, entitled to the same privileges and subject to the same laws.[1]

While Richelieu laid low the walls of their fortified towns and dissolved their circles and military organizations, he did not in the least restrict their religious privileges. He was a sincere Catholic, and would have been glad to lead the erring sheep into

[1] For a fuller statement of the position of the Huguenot party at this time, I would refer to *France under Richelieu and Mazarin*, i. 83 *et seq.*

the one fold, but he was too sagacious a statesman to weaken France by a policy of persecution.

The Huguenots now entered upon a period of tranquillity and prosperity. Practically they were undisturbed in the profession of their faith. Doubtless they were often subjected to petty annoyances, and sometimes to injustice. The great majority of the people were Catholics, and religious toleration had not entered into the habits or the convictions of the age. But on the whole, the Edict of Nantes was fairly carried out. The Huguenots possessed the industry and the intelligence which usually accompany good morals; they were thrifty and prosperous. On Sundays they attended their temples without fear of disturbance, joined in singing the psalms which were dear to them, and listened with pleasure to the discourses of ministers who were renowned for their ability and their prolixity. On week days they added to their worldly estates with reasonable success. They had no cause to be dissatisfied with the government, and they were entirely loyal to it. During the wars of the Fronde, ambitious noblemen endeavored to induce the Huguenots to take up arms, but they piped to them in vain. The Protestants were contented, and they remained peaceful.

Mazarin regarded a Huguenot and a Catholic with equal favor. The cardinal was a statesman and not a priest, and he was imbued with the tolerant principles of modern days. Perhaps it was because, like Henry IV., he was not a man of strong beliefs. Huguenot generals led armies to victory during his administration; Huguenots filled important positions in the finances. He recognized the steady allegiance of the party during the disturbances of the Fronde, and he rewarded it with favor. "The little flock feeds

on poisonous herbs," he said, "but it does not wander from the fold."

Such was the condition of the Protestant party in France when Mazarin died and Louis XIV. assumed power. Different theories have been advanced as to the conduct and the purposes of that monarch. It has been claimed, on the one hand, that he early resolved upon a policy of persecution, and that long years were occupied in systematic preparation for the overthrow of heresy. On the other hand, Louis has been represented as tolerant, or at least indifferent, in his early years, and to the evil influence of Mme. de Maintenon, assisted by Jesuit confessors, have been ascribed the barbarities of the dragonnades and the evils of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Neither of these views is correct. Louis was naturally a bigoted Catholic; his mind was narrow, and any conception of religious toleration was outside of his mental grasp. Hardly had he assumed power when he resolved to restrict the privileges of the Huguenots in every way in which it could legally be done. All temples that were not authorized by the terms of the edict were to be destroyed; no Protestant could hope for promotion in the councils or the armies of Louis XIV.[1] Unfortunately, when one is resolved to attack a distasteful minority by all legal means, the endeavor is sure to lead in time to the adoption of illegal means.

While Louis wished to draw his Huguenot subjects from the errors of their ways, he intended that they should have the benefit of the laws which already existed in their behalf. Even when the era of persecution had fairly begun, the king disapproved of the

[1] See this policy stated, *Instructions aux Ambassadeurs*, Rome, vi. 108, April 17, 1662.

violent measures which his agents adopted in the work of persuasion, and to a large extent he remained in ignorance of the brutality and oppression by which soldiers, priests, and officials sought to swell the list of conversions. It is creditable to his character that he opposed such measures, though it does not speak well for his intelligence that he was deceived as to their existence. In the early part of his reign, Louis prepared what may be called a manual of royalty for the use of his son. In this he has stated the views which he then held as to the treatment of his Protestant subjects. He declared the existence of the sect a calamity which he regretted, that he was resolved to grant them no favor, and to hold them to the letter of the law. "But those who wish to employ violence," he writes, "do not understand the nature of the evil."[1] In 1663, he wrote to Charles II. remonstrating against the severities which the English Parliament sought to inflict upon Catholics, and appealing to the moderation with which Huguenots were treated in France.[2] Three years later, we find a letter in which the king declares that his Protestant subjects were as faithful to him as any others, and should receive equal consideration.[3]

Notwithstanding these professions, which were reasonably sincere, Louis already hoped that victories over heresy might be added to his other triumphs. Twenty-one years before the revocation of the edict, the French minister at Vienna declared that his master was most eager to extirpate dissent, and that, if his reign continued to be successful, in a few years heresy would

[1] *Œuvres de Louis XIV.*, i. 84–89.

[2] Louis to Charles II., April 4, 1663.

[3] Louis to Duke of Saint Aignan, April 1, 1666.

be extinct in France.[1] Such a statement received no disavowal, and it expressed the hopes which Louis already entertained. Still he desired that the great work should be accomplished without violence, and that the Huguenots should be converted and not persecuted.

A king who was thus disposed was encouraged and incited by his clergy. The two cardinals who had ruled France for almost forty years had given little heed to ecclesiastical counsels, but Louis listened willingly to religious advisers, and was inclined to conform to their requests. He was a man who could be easily influenced, and the advice which he received from the clergy was peculiarly adapted to operate upon his mind.

Every five years the Gallican Church held a general assembly, and from 1660 to 1685 each assembly demanded further restrictions upon the Protestants, until at last there was nothing left to ask. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes has been declared the work of Jesuit confessors. It is doubtful if Père la Chaise gave the measure any more hearty approval than did Bossuet and Fléchier. The Gallican clergy deserve no special condemnation for their action; they must be judged by the era in which they lived. Toleration was almost unknown outside of France. It was not only Catholic countries, like Spain and Austria, which had extirpated heresy, and would have undertaken the task again if there had been occasion for it; the cause of tolerance fared little better in the most enlightened of Protestant nations. When Louis XIV. in 1672 demanded the free exercise of the Catholic religion in Holland, this request excited deeper

[1] Grémonville to king, December 18, 1664.

indignation among the Dutch than his endeavors to rob them of their provinces and deprive them of their commerce. In England, not only the Catholics but Protestant dissenters were subjected to injustice, of which the end has hardly been reached two hundred years later. As late as 1696 a man was hanged in Edinburgh for heresy.[1] Notwithstanding the massacre of St. Bartholomew and the dragonnades, the history of religious freedom in France compares favorably with that of any other European nation. In the march of toleration France has often been in the van, and has rarely been far in the rear.

From about 1675 we find a noticeable increase of activity in the endeavors to lead, or to drive, the Huguenots into the fold of St. Peter. The king began a systematic restriction of the privileges which they enjoyed. Complaints were made that temples had been erected in places not authorized by the edicts; a commission was appointed to investigate these charges, and its decisions, with rare exceptions, were unfavorable to the Protestants. Louis became more strict in his orthodoxy as he grew older. The endeavors of Bossuet and Mme. de Maintenon for his conversion stimulated his interest in religious questions. In 1678, the treaty of Nimeguen was signed. An almost unbroken peace of ten years followed, and this respite from foreign complications afforded the opportunity for undisturbed religious persecution. It is clear that by this time Louis had formed the definite purpose of extirpating dissent in his kingdom. He was led on alike by piety and by ambition. Doubtless he believed that he was serving God in this great undertaking, but he was also accomplishing

[1] Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, i. 354.

what would add to his own eternal renown. He had conquered foreign kings, and now he would beat down foreign gods. Posterity should see that the forces of heresy yielded to the arms of Louis the Great.[1] It was soon discovered that the favor of the king could be secured by converting heretics in Languedoc as well as by winning battles in the Lowlands, and Louis found his servants only too zealous in carrying out his desires.

The most of the Huguenot nobility had already deserted the faith of their ancestors. The loss of royal favor if they continued constant to their religion, and promotion and pensions if they abandoned it, were the means by which their conversion had been effected. The Marshal of Turenne, the greatest soldier of the age, at last followed the examples which had been set by Condés and Colignis, and at the mature age of fifty-seven renounced the errors of Calvinism. The Huguenot party once contained a considerable proportion of the greatest families in France. It lost them all. Two centuries later the French nobility is still noted for its stanch allegiance to the Catholic Church.

The humbler members remained more constant to their faith. They were, indeed, less exposed to temptation. A duke or a viscount might be allured by a marshal's baton, or by the collar of the Order of the Holy Ghost, but such bribes were not offered to a silk weaver of Tours, or to a wine merchant of Bordeaux. Nor had they been much disturbed by efforts for their enlightenment. Zealous members of the Catholic

[1] Expressions such as these can be found in innumerable eulogies and pamphlets of the period. The praise that pleases reveals the motives of the actor.

clergy had occasionally sought to rescue a soul in danger of perdition, but no organized attempt had been made for the conversion of the Huguenots. Under the auspices of Louis himself, a systematic endeavor was now made to lead the entire body of French Protestants into the Church of Rome. Persuasion and money were the agencies which were first relied upon. A fund was set apart for the conversion of heretics, and was dispensed by bishops and officials in religious bribery. The sums paid for converts were small. The average current rate was about six francs. Pellisson wrote that he would not forbid the payment of one hundred francs, but if such an amount was given freely it would unduly increase the market price.[1] The persons who were thus induced to profess themselves Catholics were naturally very questionable converts. Some claimed to be Calvinists, only that they might receive a few francs for changing their faith. Others saw an opportunity for gaining a little money, and were ignorant or careless as to the act for which they received it.

Whether genuine or fictitious, many renunciations were reported at Paris, and they stimulated the king to persevere in the task which he had undertaken. Other inducements were offered to those who were willing to recant. Ministers who abandoned their religion were given pensions. The new converts, as they were styled, were exempted from the taille, and from having soldiers quartered in their houses. But it was soon urged that, if it was well to offer inducements to those who docilely submitted to the desire of their ruler for their conversion, it was also desirable that penalties should be imposed on the obstinate who

[1] *Mémoire de Pellisson*, June 12, 1677.

refused to profess the true faith. If a Huguenot artisan had renounced the error of his ways, and was entitled to have his taxes reduced, and to be freed from the annoyance of soldiers living in his family, was it not both just and expedient that his more obstinate companion in heresy should pay a double tax, and should have soldiers billeted upon him until he saw the fallacies of Calvinism? Thus the payment of rewards for conversions led to a system of penalties for those who would not be converted. Almost every bishop and superintendent sent to Paris a suggestion for some new edict, by which the condition of those who continued Huguenots could be made more miserable, and hardly any suggestion was declined. The five or six years which preceded the revocation were filled with a mass of incoherent and confused legislation, directed against the Protestants in France. They could not hold any public offices; they could no longer pursue the profession of an advocate or a doctor; their schools were closed; they were excluded from many trades; they could not be apothecaries. The women could not act as midwives, lest, through their godless indifference, some new-born babe should die unbaptized, and thus incur eternal damnation.[1] A measure more odious than any of these declared that children seven years of age were competent to decide upon their religious creed.[2] An infant of seven or eight, that could comprehend religious questions no more than it could the squaring of the circle, was induced to utter some word, to sign some paper, which expressed a belief in Catholicism.

[1] *Déclarations*, February 20, 1680; June 15, 1682; July 11, 1685; August 6, 1685, etc.

[2] *Déclaration*, June 17, 1681.

Forthwith it was declared to be converted. It might be taken away from the home of its heretical parents. They must pay for its support, though deprived of the charge of its spiritual and physical welfare. No law could be devised which should furnish occasion for more odious interference, should cause more heart-breaking separations. It enabled the crafty priest, the zealous proselyter, to carry misery into almost every Protestant household in France. The example set by Mme. de Maintenon illustrates the methods practiced by those eager for the work. Her cousin still remained a Huguenot, and refused to allow his children to be educated as Catholics. Thereupon he was ordered to sea on a cruise, and in his absence Mme. de Maintenon seized the children, and had them placed in Catholic schools. The father returned to pour out his wrath on his kinswoman, but it was in vain. She had obtained the prey, and she declined to relinquish it. She had stolen in the name of the Lord; she had fraudulently rescued the children from the clutches of the enemy, and she would not surrender them to a heretic. It is unnecessary to say that they were soon induced to profess themselves Catholics. The daughter, who was then nine years old, has told us the story of her conversion. She was pleased with the music in the royal chapel, and she agreed to become a Catholic if she were allowed to hear it daily, and guaranteed against any more whippings.[1] By such arguments children were made Catholics; and when the infantile profession had once been made, the severest penalties were imposed upon parents who interfered with the belief which their offspring had adopted.

[1] *Souvenirs de Mme. de Caylus*, 478, 479, ed. Michaud; *Correspondance Générale de Mme. de Maintenon*, ii. 157 *et pas.*

The most odious oppression, and that which has most impressed posterity, grew out of the billeting of soldiers upon Protestant families. In the thing itself there was nothing new. It was an indirect mode of taxation, to which a large proportion of the people had long been subjected. When the soldiers were stationed in any district in France, they might lawfully be quartered upon the population, and the soldier had the right, in the house to which he was assigned, to dishes upon which to eat, a bed, a seat by the fire, and a place by the candle.[1]

Such an institution was liable to abuse, even when the strictest injunctions for good order were imposed upon the soldiers. It was easy to see what misery they could inflict, when they understood that their duty was to convert their hosts by making life disagreeable for them. To Marillac, superintendent of Poitiers, belongs the gloomy distinction of having first used the soldiers as a means of conversion; upon Louvois, the minister of war, rests the responsibility of having allowed it. In 1681, a regiment of dragoons was sent into Poitou to be quartered upon the Huguenots who had refused to be converted, and from them the ill-omened name of the dragonnades had its origin. The superintendent was ordered to see that the dragoons committed no disorders in the houses where they were stationed; and as complaints of their conduct reached Versailles, vigorous remonstrances were sent to Marillac.[2] They were unheeded, as similar remonstrances were unheeded during the years that followed. The local officers were fierce in their zeal, and apprehended nothing worse than mild cen-

[1] *Réglement*, November 12, 1661.

[2] Louvois to Marillac, March 18, May 7, August 23, 1681.

sure if they sinned from excess of fervor in the good work. They knew that the king was pleased when long lists of conversions were sent to him, and, if he was over-nice as to the means employed, they did not feel bound to respect his scruples. Who wishes the end wishes the means, was the motto adopted by the agents of the government. It needed no great sagacity to see that when an ignorant and brutal soldiery were quartered upon those whom they regarded as obstinate heretics, with the avowed object of driving them to abandon their faith, they would regard any excesses not only as venial, but as praiseworthy.

The efforts of Marillac produced many converts, but nevertheless the government ceased for a while the use of the instrument of conversion upon which he had relied. Louis was annoyed because frequent complaints came to him of the cruelties perpetrated by the soldiers; the reports of their sufferings, which the Huguenots carried all over Europe, excited an outcry that was unwelcome at Versailles. This lull in persecution was followed by a fiercer outburst. Encouraged by the appearance of greater lenity, some of the Protestants undertook to rebuild churches that had been destroyed, and in places there were trifling disturbances. It was absurd for the ministers of Louis XIV. to claim that there was any danger of serious resistance from the Huguenots. The authority of the king was firmly established, and the Protestants had neither the power nor the inclination to resist the measures which the government adopted. Yet the least trace of insubordination, when their churches were burned, their meetings dispersed, or their wives insulted, was treated as rebellion against the king. The charge of the measures against the Protestants

was assumed by Louvois, and he proceeded with as little mercy as when he gave the Palatinate over to fire and pillage. Louis was always irritated by any resistance to his wishes, and the delay of the Huguenots in doing what he desired hardened his heart against them. He was urged on by confessors, bishops, and ministers to the great work of conversion. In 1683, the persecution of the Huguenots was again in full blast, and it was not relaxed until the Edict of Nantes had been revoked, and the public observance of the Huguenot faith had been forbidden in France.

The year 1685 was the great epoch for missionary activity, and the dragonnades were directed by the fiery zeal of Louvois. In Béarn, in Guienne, in Languedoc, in all the districts where the Protestants were numerous, soldiers were sent to be quartered on those who remained obstinate. The superintendents asked for dragoons to second the missionaries, and their requests were granted.[1] It is true that orders were also sent to allow no excesses. The Huguenots might be compelled to furnish the soldiers food and shelter, until they were willing to declare themselves Catholics, but no other violence must be exercised.[2] It was impossible that these directions could be enforced among troops sent on such an errand. The object of the superintendents was to make converts,

[1] *Journal de Foucault*, 79. Foucault was superintendent in Béarn in 1685, and his journal is one of the most valuable authorities as to the persecution of the Huguenots. The official correspondence of Louvois contains full particulars of the progress and the extent of the dragonnades.

[2] Louvois to Boufflers, July 31, 1685, August 22, etc. It was much like a general's turning soldiers loose into a captured city, and telling them to remember to be civil to the ladies, and not to break the furniture.

and the troops pleased them best whose labors were most efficacious. At the least sign of resistance, orders for violent measures came from the war office itself. "You may increase the allowance for food ten times," Louvois wrote the superintendent at Dieppe, "and permit the cavalry to make whatever disorder is necessary in order to drive those people from their position, and furnish an example which will help to convert others." [1]

The extent of the cruelties practiced was perhaps exaggerated by the sufferers, but it is certain that they were a disgrace to the age of Louis XIV. If the soldiers did no worse, they wasted the substance of those on whom they were billeted in riotous eating and drinking. When the unhappy Huguenot could furnish them no more money to buy supplies, they sold his furniture; and when the proceeds of that were gone, he might be thrown into prison.[2] The pecuniary losses were not the worst of this oppression. Even when the soldiers did not indulge in actual violence, they often made a hell of the houses in which they were quartered. They insulted the wives, and cracked foul jests with the daughters. They kept the family awake all night with singing and carousing, with drinking liquor at their expense, and roaring out indecent ditties. They entered an orderly and religious household, and existence there became like life in a brothel or a dramshop.

Sometimes their practices far exceeded even these devices for making existence unendurable. Men were

[1] Louvois to Beaupré, 17 and 19 November, 1685; Louvois to Foucault, November 17, 1685.

[2] Louvois to Bezons, November 27, 1685; Louvois to Foucault, December 17, 1685.

hung up by their thumbs to the timbers of their own cottages, because their views on purgatory or transubstantiation were not acceptable to the dragoons about the hearth. A wife was tied to the bedpost while the soldiers toasted her husband's naked feet by the fire. Many were thrown into loathsome prisons for not observing some edict. A minister seventy-two years old, who had preached in violation of law, was broken upon the wheel.[1]

The best proof of the severity of the dragonnades is the effect they produced. Many became Catholics through other means of persuasion, but it was the fear of the soldiers which converted whole provinces in a week. "It is certain that the mere approach of the troops will produce a great number of conversions," said the superintendent of Béarn.[2] The Archbishop of Aix confessed that the fear of the dragoons persuaded many more than either his money or his eloquence.[3] "Crowds of former heretics," wrote a superintendent, "now sing Te Deums within the

[1] *Mém. de Cosnac,* ii. 120. Cosnac endeavored to convert him before his execution, but in vain. The authorities for the severities practiced upon the Huguenots are to be found in innumerable books and pamphlets published by refugees. Benoit, a refugee, in his *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes,* has devoted five large volumes to the subject, which contain much of value, though he writes from a strong partisan standpoint.

[2] *Mém. de Foucault,* 118.

[3] *Mém. de Cosnac,* ii. 111. "J'avoue que la crainte des dragons et les logements dans les maisons des héretiques y pouvoient contribuer beaucoup plus que moi," he says, speaking of the result of his own exertions. "The Huguenots are ill-disposed," writes the superintendent of Orléans, "si l'on n'ayde la parole de Dieu de l'approche de quelques troupes."—*Cor. des Con. Gén.,* i. 73. Such expressions are very frequent. They sound blasphemous, but they were not so regarded by the writers.

churches, and cry 'Vive le roi!' without." "Every bulletin," writes Mme. de Maintenon, "tells the king of thousands of conversions." [1]

In Béarn, where there had been 22,000 Protestants, soon but 400 were left. The superintendent has related his religious victories in a business-like manner. "I went to Pontacq," he says, "with the bishop, to work at conversions." In two days they made a hundred proselytes. "Orthez was the last place to be converted. I sent the soldiers there, who brought them to terms." [2] In other districts the progress was even more rapid. In the generality of Bordeaux 60,000 changed their faith in twenty days.[3] The city of Orange was turned from its heresy in a single day. Only one minister remained obstinate. "As for the judges of the Parliament," wrote the officer in charge, "they would have declared themselves Mahometans if I had desired." [4] The time in which the work of enlightenment would be completed was predicted with accuracy. In Languedoc, where there were almost 200,000 Protestants, the Duke of Noailles wrote that by November 25 the province would contain no more Huguenots. Encouraged by the rapidity of the work, he wrote again that he had asked until November 25, but the month of October would be as much time as he should require.[5] It was indeed ample. There were more

[1] *Lettres édifiantes*, i. 316.

[2] *Mémoire de Foucault*, 101, 125, 127.

[3] Louvois to Con. Gén., September 7, 1685.

[4] Tessé to Louvois, November 13, 1685.

[5] Noailles to Louvois, cited in Rulhière, *Eclaircissements historiques sur les causes de la revocation de l'édit de Nantes*, i. 317–319. Noailles states the number of Huguenots in Languedoc at 240,000, but the more trustworthy figures of D'Aguesseau put it at 182,787. — *D. G.*, 795.

Huguenots in Languedoc than in any other province in France. In a few days all but an insignificant fraction were enrolled as Catholics.

The nature of the conversions which were thus obtained may be easily imagined. Superintendents and bishops were not disturbed as to the sincerity of their victims, nor exacting as to the form of abjuration to be required. Some made the sign of the cross at the bottom of a paper held by a dragoon. Others were claimed as proselytes if they would say the words "Jesus Maria." Meetings were called of the Protestants in some town or city; a motion was made that they adopt the Catholic faith; it was carried without resistance, and all the inhabitants were at once reported as converted. A panic spread through the Protestant population. In one province after another it was announced that the Huguenots had abandoned their belief. Terrified and disheartened, the bulk of the French Huguenots submitted to any form of abjuration which would free them from present evils, with little thought of what might be the final results of their act.

It is curious that professions thus made and thus obtained should have furnished any satisfaction to those who honestly believed in the Catholic religion, or that it should have been hoped that men and women whose conversions were due to the fear of outrage and ruin would imbibe a saving conviction of Catholic truth. But such a belief accorded with the desires and prejudices of the time. Te Deums were sung and guns were fired as the news came of the great victories of the faith. The palace and grounds of Versailles were magnificently illuminated. There is no doubt that Louis thought that the work had been accomplished, and that practically all of his subjects

were now adherents of the one church. The king desired the result so greatly that he was eager to believe that it had been achieved. The fact that Protestantism had practically ceased to exist was urged as a reason for the repeal of the Edict of Nantes. The opinion of two theologians and two jurisconsults was asked for the king's enlightenment. They advised him that he might lawfully revoke the edict, and that by so doing he would promote the welfare of religion and of his people. A memorial was presented which suggested that such an act might drive the Huguenots from France and weaken the kingdom. Louis replied that he had reflected upon this, but reasons of interest were unworthy of consideration when compared with the advantages of a measure that would insure tranquillity for the state, would restore to religion its former splendor, and to authority its lawful rights. The council was unanimous for the revocation.[1]

On October 17, 1685, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes was signed by the king, and on the 22d it was registered with the Parliament of Paris. The Huguenot pastors were ordered to leave the country within fifteen days; all Protestant temples were to be destroyed at once, and the exercise of that form of worship, either in public or private, was forbidden in France.[2] The repeal was received with applause by the whole Catholic population. Of all the acts of Louis XIV., this was the one upon which praise and eulogium were most lavishly bestowed. The official instrument was said to have been hastened that the aged Le Tellier might execute it as chancellor. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," he

[1] *Mémoire of Duke of Burgundy.*

[2] *Mém. de Foucault,* 135 *et seq.*

exclaimed, as he set his seal to the paper by which dissent was abolished. A few days later he died, declaring this to be the crowning act of fifty years of public service. Crowds from Paris rushed out to the great temple at Charenton, which could hold 14,000 worshipers, and tore it down amid frantic enthusiasm. The Parliaments had protested against the Edict of Nantes; they registered its revocation with unanimous approval. Mme. de Sévigné expressed the sentiments of polite society when she wrote that the king had done nothing so memorable, and declared the dragoons to have been good ministers, whose work the missionaries would now perfect.[1] Engravings represented angels bearing the revocation to Bossuet and La Chaise, while Louis stood by ready to affix his name. Poets declared this to be the greatest achievement of the greatest of monarchs.

Amid the general outpouring of praise, the voice of the clergy was most distinct. Bossuet proclaimed Louis XIV. a new Constantine, a Theodosius, and a Charlemagne, who had sustained the faith and exterminated heresy. His hearers were bidden to love the piety of Louis, and to make the heavens resound with their acclamations. "The work is worthy of your reign and of yourself," said the great preacher. "Heresy is no more. . . . May the King of Heaven preserve the king of earth. It is the prayer of the churches; it is the prayer of the bishops." The Archbishop of Aix, acting as spokesman of the general assembly, predicted that the destruction of heresy would redound more to Louis's fame than all the triumphal arches which commemorated his other achievements.[2]

[1] *Lettres de Sévigné*, vii. 470.

[2] Discourse at the assembly of clergy in 1690.

Thirty years later, the saintly Massillon declared that in the interests of pure religion Louis had despised the timid counsels of earthly wisdom, and that the destruction of profane temples more than compensated France for what she had lost in wealth and citizens.[1]

However much Louis was exalted as the destroyer of heresy, the fact that the mass of the new converts remained Huguenots at heart soon became apparent, even to the dullest. Indeed, the subjects of persecution believed for a while that the revocation of the Edict of Nantes would make their lot more tolerable. The last clause had stated that, until God enlightened them, the unconverted Huguenots might remain tranquilly in France, continue their occupations, and enjoy their property. While their public worship was forbidden, the Protestants hoped that at least they would be left in peace, and that the era of persecution was passed. In fact, by no edict did either Louis XIV. or his successors declare that a Protestant could not live in France. It was at any outward observance, and not at the inward belief, that their ordinances were directed. The hope of toleration excited by the wording of the edict was dispelled by the conduct of the officials. A letter of Louvois stated the course to be pursued in reference to the Huguenots: "His Majesty wishes that every means shall be used to show them that they can expect neither repose nor favor, so long as they continue in a religion which is distasteful to him. Those who desire the stupid glory of being the last to renounce it may receive much more severe treatment."[2]

[1] *Oraison funèbre de Louis XIV.*

[2] Louvois to Noailles, November 6, 1685.

Most of the Protestants were involved in legal meshes of the most serious nature. By whatever means they had been driven to declare themselves Catholics, when once they had assumed that position they were exposed to new and cruel legislation. The converts who again joined in the service of the religion which they believed in their hearts, but which they had renounced with their tongues, could now be punished, not as Huguenots, but as apostate Catholics. The ordinances directed against this unhappy class were of the most odious nature. Many who had sought to obtain tranquillity by a nominal profession of the Catholic faith, when the hour of death came, dared not die with a lie upon their conscience. They confessed their real belief, and refused the consolations of a religion which they regarded as a mockery. Even this they could not do with impunity. An unbidden priest might enter the chamber of the dying man, regardless of the protestations of the family, and demand of him to receive the sacraments of the Catholic Church; if he refused, the priest might again return, accompanied by the judges or local officials as witnesses of the offense. The distress of such a scene to the patient and the family; the unseemly wrangling and protestations; the priest elbowing his way through weeping friends, resorting almost to physical force to press the sacraments upon the dying man, and claiming that some nod or sigh extracted by the final agony was a sign of compliance; the terrors of those who believed that the eternal happiness of one dear to them might depend on his conduct in the last few hours of his life, — all this was only the beginning of a more serious procedure. If the sick man recovered, he could be sent to the gal-

leys, but he was not allowed to cheat justice by dying, nor was the law content with the confiscation of the property he left. A process was instituted against the corpse of the heretic. It was condemned to be dragged naked through the streets on a hurdle, and at last to be thrown into the ditch with the offal and refuse of the town.[1] This was no idle form of words. The penalty, with all its revolting detail, was inflicted on the bodies both of men and women.[2] A crowd of fanatics, drunk with brandy and religion, seized the corpse as soon as life was gone, and showed their piety by subjecting it to every indignity, until at last, disfigured and mutilated, it was thrown upon some heap of carrion.

As a result of the persecutions to which they were subjected, large numbers of Huguenots sought for refuge and peace in other lands. This, however, was also forbidden. There were severe laws against those who endeavored to expatriate themselves. The Huguenots arrested when flying from France could be punished with the confiscation of their property, the men sent to the galleys, the women condemned to have their heads shaved and to be put in some convent or religious retreat. Notwithstanding the severity of these regulations, a large stream of emigration for years poured out of France. Soldiers kept guard at the frontiers, police officers patrolled the roads ordinarily taken by the refugees, but it was impossible to watch the whole of so large a country as France, and great numbers constantly made their escape. Every

[1] *Déclaration*, November 19, 1680 ; April 23, 1686.

[2] Foucault in his memoir speaks of several occasions when he assisted in the trial of a corpse, and when the legal penalty was inflicted and executed. — *Mém. de Foucault*, 155 *et passim.*

device was used to avoid the vigilance of the officers. At the seacoast the trading ships of the English and Dutch were ready to furnish refuge for the victims of religious persecution. Many a bale of merchandise, many a barrel labeled with the name of some wine of Bordeaux, contained within it men, women, and children, stowed away to avoid detection, and risking death by suffocation rather than lead a life of misery. The market days were favorable opportunities for the Huguenots to start on their flight. Disguised as peasants on their vegetable carts, they drove through the gates and traversed many miles before suspicion was excited. At certain places guides were in waiting, who undertook the perilous task of conducting them to the frontier. The journey was painful and dangerous, the roads were usually bad, and it was only at night that the fugitives dared to venture upon them. Portions of the country which are now highly cultivated, and occupied by the little farms of prosperous peasants, were then covered by forests and swamps. Through these they toiled, women and young children, braving exposure which often proved fatal. As they approached the frontiers the danger of arrest became greater, for these were patrolled by guards. Innumerable disguises were adopted in order to lull suspicion. One man strolled along arrayed as a fine gentleman, cane in hand, taking his morning walk. Another was a hunter, with his gun on his shoulder and his dog following, in search of pheasants or grouse. Many were arrayed as peasants with produce to sell, or as porters carrying burdens. Large numbers made their journey as wandering beggars, which only too often was the reality rather than a disguise. The refugees were sometimes plundered

by the peasants of the little they could carry with them, but usually they received friendly treatment.[1] Notwithstanding the penalties against those who assisted the emigrants, there were quarters where they were sure of aid, such as existed in the United States during the era of the Fugitive Slave Acts. So many were arrested that it was impossible to inflict upon all of them the punishment which the law prescribed. But the number was large of those who suffered the full penalty of their act, and the galleys were filled with Protestants who had been captured while seeking to escape to other lands.

The institution of the galleys, as it existed under Louis XIV., was in sad contrast with the splendor of the reign and its boasted civilization. The French galleys were propelled by gangs of rowers, and differed little in construction from those which had carried Greek and Roman soldiers over the Mediterranean to battle with Persians and Carthaginians. Such craft were of little service on a rough sea like the Atlantic, and the French clung to their use long after they had ceased to be anything but instruments of torture. Both Louis XIV. and Colbert, in their zeal for building up a navy, attached great importance to manning the galleys. It was impossible to obtain free labor for such work, so the banks were filled with criminals and slaves. For this purpose the government of Louis XIV. purchased slaves with alacrity; nor was any line drawn between white and black, Christian and heretic. For Turks the agents were instructed to pay as much as 450 francs, because they were strong

[1] For instances of the former, see *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Gén.*, i. 105 *et passim* ; Louvois to Lambert, January 30, 1686.

enough to endure the work, and the horrors of the life did not kill them as rapidly as it did others. Those who objected to such a traffic were consoled by the thought that Turkish idolaters would now have the advantage of Christian surroundings.[1] The agents were directed to buy also the Russian prisoners who were occasionally in the market at Constantinople. Negroes could be readily purchased, and even some Iroquois were entrapped and sent over for this service.[2]

Criminals were sentenced to the same fate, and the judges were enjoined to use their best endeavors to furnish a supply of able-bodied convicts.[3] Officers of the court, who had not succeeded in obtaining as many convicts as were desired, felt bound to send their apologies.[4]

The life of the galley slave was a more miserable lot than is now inflicted upon any one in civilized or uncivilized lands. The prisoners were taken in large gangs to the seashore, attached by the neck to a long chain, and subjected to such abuse on the way that a convict tells us he suffered more in his march from Dunkirk to Marseilles, than during twelve years of service in the galleys.[5] Even the privilege of being fastened by the leg, instead of the neck, was a favor rarely granted. When they had reached the

[1] Savary, *Le parfait négociant.*

[2] Colbert to Intendant des Galères, November 12, 1676; *Lettres de Colbert*, iii. 53, 188 *et passim.*

[3] *Lettres de Colbert*, iii. 50.

[4] Maniban to Colbert, August 18, 1662. "Nous devrions avoir confusion de si mal servir le roi en cette partie, vu la necessité qu'il tesmoigne d'avoir des forçats." Notwithstanding this apology for lack of zeal, forty-three criminals had been sentenced to the galleys at that term of the court.

[5] *Mémoires d'un protestant*, 340.

boats they were chained together six at an oar, naked to the waist, except a red bonnet on their heads. Overseers walked the decks, and the rawhide constantly descended to stir the rowers to greater activity. A large percentage always had bloody backs, and gore mingled with the sweat that poured from them in the violence of their exertions. Sometimes gags were put in their mouths to check any noise or outcry. They were bitted and whipped with more cruelty than beasts of burden. When the galley was in service, the men were kept chained together by their waists both day and night. Exhausted by the work, a man often fell dead at the oar. The rawhide was first applied to see if he were shamming; if he was found to be lifeless, the body was thrown into the sea like carrion, and another took his place. For light offenses, twenty or thirty blows of the bastinado were inflicted, and sometimes one hundred. After ten or twelve blows the sufferer usually lost speech and power of movement, and he rarely lived to receive the full penalty.

The officers in command were as cruel as the overseers. The ownership of slaves brutalizes the master, and the galleys had the same effect on those who had charge of them. The commander of a galley delighted to exhibit two or three hundred naked wretches to his visitors. At a whistle or a nod they must rise, and bow, and go through their evolutions. Some were ordered to sing and dance for the amusement of guests. They were inspected and discussed, as are the beasts at a menagerie. One visitor asked how the men could get any sleep, chained closely together at the oar. "I will show you," said the captain. The men were ordered out to row at double speed against

a strong tide. The work was so exhausting that they could be kept to it only by the constant use of the rope. At midnight, when supper was over, the captain brought his guests to view the galley. Overcome by their labor, the men had fallen asleep one on another, with the blood running down the backs of most of them. "Now I will show you how to waken them," said the officer, and in a moment the whistle sounded, and a shower of blows stirred up the exhausted men.[1]

The term of punishment expired, and often a long sentence had been imposed for a light offense. Yet this was not sure to bring the galleyman relief from his misery. For the convict chained to his oar, as for the gentleman confined in the Bastille, though there was no authority for his further confinement, there was no legal process to obtain his release. Men remained working at the oar for years after their terms had expired, because the government had need of them, and no one interested himself in their behalf. A criminal sentenced to the galleys for five years in 1660 was still at the oar in 1679. "As he has remained fourteen years beyond his time," the superintendent writes to Colbert, "his liberty might be accorded him by grace, if it is agreeable to you." [2]

It was to such a fate that Protestants were condemned for life, because they had endeavored to leave a country which denied them liberty of conscience. Clergymen, lawyers, and merchants, found themselves chained next to criminals and slaves, and were required to row for ten or twelve hours, naked in the

[1] *Mémoires d'un protestant*, 451–453. This account is given by a man who was then working on the galley, and who was not addicted to querulous lamentations.

[2] Superintendent of galleys to Colbert, March 13, 1679.

sun, under the lash of an overseer. Death soon relieved many of them, but such was the punishment which Louis XIV. specially approved of for men who persevered in a faith that was distasteful to him. At the peace of Utrecht, Queen Anne obtained the liberty of about three hundred Huguenots who were then serving in the galleys.[1]

After all the pæans which celebrated Louis as a new Constantine, and all the cruelty and injustice by which the victories of religion were obtained, heresy was not extinguished in France. Louis XIV. and his successors continued to rule over heretics. If persecution had never been allowed to abate, all Protestants would at last have been driven from France, or the parents would have become nominal Catholics and the children sincere Catholics.[2] The religion of a small minority can be stamped out, if the majority are willing to go to the lengths necessary for the result. But while Louis and his advisers were persecutors, they were unwilling to use all the means needed

[1] The *Correspondance de Colbert*, t. iii., and *Correspondance Administrative sous Louis XIV.*, t. ii. contain a great amount of information about the galleys and their management. An interesting work, *Mémoires d'un protestant*, written by a young Huguenot who was arrested in attempting to escape from France, and served twelve years in the galleys, gives a vivid account of the life. He says that the Protestants were usually better treated by the overseers than were the other convicts. The book is written with an air of candor that excites confidence in all that it contains. Evelyn, in his *Diary*, i. 85, describes the appearance of a galley crew which was exhibited for his edification. It was not until late in the eighteenth century that the use of galleys in France was finally abandoned.

[2] Such was the theory attributed to Mme. de Maintenon in one of the apocryphal letters. It probably expressed her belief, even if she gave no utterance to it.

to effect the end. The cruelties which they allowed were enough to be odious, but not enough to be efficacious. Intolerance was in the character of the mass of the people, but a taste for persecution was not. The severities practiced before and after the revocation of the edict began to relax, as it was apparent that it would require long years of constant repression to make good Catholics out of the Huguenots. The same wavering and uncertain measures continued to mark the policy of the government, which had characterized it during all of this miserable and abortive attempt at conversion. Wearied of the endeavor to keep watch over a long line of frontier and seaboard, the refugees were allowed to escape without molestation. Louvois wrote that their flight would be beneficial to the king, and the country would be better off without them.[1] Still the edict which forbade their going was not repealed, and after a time it was again enforced.

The wars in which Louis became involved led to a milder treatment of the new converts. The troops were needed for other work, and the government feared lest persecution should excite the Protestants to insurrection. The superintendents were directed to check the zeal of priests and officials, and to avoid inflicting upon the corpses of the impenitent the loathsome punishment prescribed by law.[2] A party in the church raised its voice against the means used to drive prose-

[1] Louvois to Boufflers, December 16, 1687. "Il faut attendre de la bonté divine la cessation de ce désordre." — Louis to Avaux, October 30, 1687.

[2] See *Mém. de Pontchartrain*, 1697, complaining that the superintendents, by their excessive zeal, were driving new converts out of France, and that such conduct must be stopped. See, also, *Cor. Gén.*, i. 120, 176 *et pas.*

lytes to the mass, as a profanation of the mysteries of religion. In the confusion of ordinances and of their enforcement, the unhappy convert was involved in hopeless embarrassment. He asked a priest to marry him, and was told that his Catholicism was so dubious that he was not entitled to the benefit of the sacraments of the church. He resorted to a form that satisfied his own conscience, and some zealous civil functionary prosecuted him for refusing to comply with the regulations as to marriage. For almost a century, a large body of people lived in apprehension of having their marriages declared illegal, their children bastards, and their wills invalid.[1]

While dragonnades were abandoned, and violent endeavors to compel the new converts to comply with Catholic usages were only resorted to in some transient burst of piety, those who attended any public exercise of the reformed faith still exposed themselves to the utmost rigor of the government.[2] Even those who met in private houses, and there joined in prayer and song, were punished by imprisonment and the galleys.[3] A large reward was offered for the arrest of the ministers, who returned at the peril of their lives to exhort the victims of oppression to remain constant in the faith, until this tyranny was overpast. Assemblies were held in the open air, amid remote forests, or under the overhanging rocks of the Cevennes. Sentinels watched to report the approach of any troops who might have learned of the meeting. When the

[1] Rulhière, *Eclaircissements sur les causes de la révocation de l'édit de Nantes*, ii. 114, 178 *et pas.*

[2] The penalty imposed by the law was death. — *Décl.*, July 1, 1686.

[3] *Mém. de Foucault*, 162, 270.

soldiers succeeded in surprising these assemblies, they were directed to fire on them, and to spare neither men nor women. A Protestant who joined in the public worship of his faith was hunted down and shot like a noxious beast.[1] Notwithstanding these dangers, ministers were found ready to exhort, and auditors eager to listen. "They came out of their holes to pray God and disappeared like spirits," complained Mme. de Sévigné, "until the governor of the province was wearied of their pursuit."[2]

A minute espionage filled the reports of the police during the latter part of his reign, and a petty persecution occupied much of its energies. Some one wrote that a doctor among the new converts had spoken lightly of the mass; and his case had to be investigated. The religious zeal of a tallow-chandler, the statement that a tinsmith was slack in his observances, furnished occupation for the officers of the state.[3] The conduct of the Duke of La Force and his family was deemed worthy of the personal attention of the sovereign, and is discussed in innumerable state documents. The duke's children were taken away from him, and were educated to such good purpose that his son became an active persecutor of the Huguenots. The duke himself was driven to profess Catholicism, but his wife remained a stanch Protestant, and under her influence the religious zeal of the duke was unsatisfactory. He was sent to the Bastille, and after two years he was induced to sign a second abjuration. As he was sick, his wife was allowed to attend him, and again

[1] *Mém. de Foucault*, 219; Louvois to Foucault, March 1, 1688; *Mém. de Cosnac*, 116; Louvois to La Trousse, August 23, 1688.

[2] *Correspondance*, viii. 532.

[3] *Cor. adm.*, iv. 288, 403 *et pas.*

his conduct excited disapproval. A spy reported that, while the duke claimed to be too ill to attend mass, he had been seen visiting his stables. Thereupon a police officer was sent to take up his residence at the chateau, and to see that the wife did not talk religion to her husband. A priest was presently sent to his assistance, and the officer was directed to follow his victim both day and night. The duke could not be left, even when he entered his bedchamber, lest the duchess should use those moments for his religious perversion. Tormented alike in body and mind, the unhappy man at last died. For fifteen days before his death, his wife was not allowed to see him. Louis assured his courtiers that thanks to such measures the duke would die a good Catholic.[1] The *autos da fé* of the Inquisition were perhaps more cruel, but they were certainly more dignified than a persecution such as this.

As it became manifest that the treatment of the Huguenots was injuring France without helping Catholicism, some voices were raised for an abandonment of the effort at conversion. They met with no response from a king who never owned that he was wrong. It is possible that if those who advised Louis to revoke the Edict of Nantes had foreseen the results, they would have dissuaded him from the act. But the king would not now admit that he had made a mistake. His faith in himself was so implicit that he probably never realized that he had made one. Mme. de Maintenon gave her opinion, in writing, against any

[1] *Journal de Dangeau*, vii. 70. The orders of the king, the letters of the chancellor and other officials, directing the manner in which the duke and his wife should be watched and shadowed, will be found in *Correspondance administrative*, t. iv. 392, 422, 480, etc. They extend over several years.

modification of the edicts in reference to the Huguenots, and she touched the king most nearly when she wrote that it would injure his reputation to abandon an enterprise for which he had been so much praised.[1] Fervent Catholic as he was, the hope of gaining fame as the converter of millions was the most powerful motive that operated on the mind of Louis XIV. in his policy in reference to his Huguenot subjects. He would never have revoked the Edict of Nantes had he dreamed that this would be the one act of his reign which would receive the universal condemnation of posterity.

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes was a crime and a failure. The amount of material injury which it did to France has, however, been greatly exaggerated. Historians write as if that country was in a highly prosperous condition before the revocation, and by the results of that act alone was reduced to poverty and distress. It would seem to be supposed that all the industries of the kingdom were in the hands of Huguenots, that they fled from France in a body, and left no one behind who could weave or bind, sell or buy. This is far from being correct. The population of France was then about 20,000,000. The number of the Huguenots was little over 1,000,000.[2] It is im-

[1] *Let. éd.*, iv. 457, 1697.

[2] These figures are approximate. From the reports of superintendents and other officials, it is, however, possible to ascertain the Huguenot population very closely. Martin estimates the Protestants at a million and a half, but the data which he must have accepted will not bear analysis. The mass of the Huguenots were in a few southern provinces, and Languedoc was the district where they were most numerous. The most trustworthy reports give the Protestant population of that province at less than 200,000, or about one to seven as compared with the Catho-

possible to ascertain the exact number who left France, but it can be safely stated that during the entire reign of Louis XIV. the number of refugees did not exceed 250,000.[1] Certainly this was a serious loss; but five times as many emigrants have left Germany within a period of ten years, and that country has not suffered. An enormous emigration from Great Britain has for years gone hand in hand with a great increase in national wealth. If France had been prosperous and well governed, if her taxes had been judi-

lics.—*Mém. d'Aguesseau*, 1685; *D. G.*, 795. Languedoc contained nearly one fifth of the French Huguenots; and in many of the northern provinces the Protestants were an insignificant minority. Taking the entire country, the Protestant population was not over one to twenty. Louis had every opportunity to ascertain the number of the French Huguenots; and after the edict had been revoked, when he might naturally have overestimated rather than underestimated, he stated it at a little less than a million. —Louis to Cardinal d'Estrées, October 19, 1685; January 17, 1686.

[1] These figures are also derived from the comparison of a great number of official documents and reports, as well as from estimates of intelligent contemporaries. They are certainly large enough. In Languedoc, for example, the report of the superintendent in 1699 states that the entire emigration down to that time was less than 5,000. This may be an underestimate, but the same report gives the number of new converts then in the province at 198,000. — *Rapport sur Languedoc, par Baville.* Aguesseau, a very trustworthy authority, gave the Protestant population in 1685 at only 182,000. In other words, practically, the entire Protestant population of Languedoc had remained there. It had increased rather than diminished. Allowing for errors in these calculations, it is certain that the emigration from that province was small. In some northern provinces the percentage of emigration was larger, but an estimate that one quarter of the entire number of Huguenots left France is too large rather than too small. If we can trust such statistics as we have, the emigration was much less.

ciously imposed and economically collected, if there had been sufficient demand for her wares, if there had been no more deep-seated cause for her industrial decline than the loss of Huguenot refugees, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes would not have checked her material development. Had there been a demand for the product, there were plenty of hands ready and competent to do the work which had been performed by the Huguenot artisans who fled to other lands.

In the southern provinces the emigration was comparatively small. Three fourths of the Protestant population were unwilling to leave their fatherland. They were exposed to more or less of oppression and injustice, but on the whole their material condition, after the first fury of persecution was over, was about what it would have been had the Edict of Nantes remained in force. The report of 1699 from Languedoc shows that the new converts, in other words the Protestants, were more prosperous than their Catholic neighbors, and many of their merchants were very rich. This was thirteen years after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The superintendent, a bigoted Catholic, justly says that this condition of greater ease was due to their greater industry, but it shows also that the benefits of the intelligence and thrift of the Huguenots were not lost to France.

Those who left their country were undoubtedly industrious, thrifty, and useful citizens. As was said to the French government by one of its merchants, "The flight of the Huguenots carried away good heads and strong arms."[1] They carried their intelligence, their integrity, their knowledge of useful arts, to England and Holland, Switzerland and Prussia, even to the

[1] *Mém.* of a delegate from Lyons, 1701.

remote regions of Guiana and the Cape of Good Hope. They added to the prosperity of the countries which profited by French bigotry; but an emigration of one per cent. of the population, during a period of thirty years, was a minor element in the material decay of France. Then as now, industry, thrift, and willingness to labor were found among Catholics as well as Protestants. To exhausting wars, royal extravagance, unjust taxation, unwise commercial regulations, was it due that the peasant starved in his hut, that the silk looms of Tours were idle, that the weavers of Lyons were in rags, that the merchant of La Rochelle found no one to buy his wares. More than anything else in the administration of Louis XIV., the treatment of the Huguenots excites our righteous indignation, but it was not the feature of it which was most injurious to the material welfare of the country.[1]

[1] The most valuable data from which to estimate the injury done to the commercial interests of France by the Huguenot persecutions are in the *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux*, and in the reports of the superintendents as to the condition of France in 1698. A comparison of figures, which is too often omitted by statistical writers, will assist in reaching a correct result. All agree that the departure of the Huguenots was one of the causes of the extreme depression which existed in 1698, but not the principal cause. The industrial condition of France at that time would have been little better, if no Huguenot had ever fled across the borders. Languedoc was the province where the Huguenots were the most numerous. Thirteen years after the Edict of Nantes was revoked, Languedoc was still the most prosperous section of France. — *Rapport de Baville.* In many of the northern provinces, where trade was stagnant at that period, there had been hardly enough Protestants to people a village. The arts, which the Huguenots are sometimes supposed to have introduced into Holland and England, were those which in 1667

The indirect results of the revocation were more serious. It did not, indeed, destroy Protestantism as an element in French life. When religious freedom was allowed a century later, the number of those who were still Protestants, though the public services of their church had long been forbidden, was nearly as large as when the dragoons of Louvois began to act as missionaries.[1] The Protestants in France to-day bear nearly the same proportion to the Catholic population that they did under Louis XIV. But an era of persecution at the end of the seventeenth century was an injury to the cause of religion itself. To this was it due, in some part at least, that the austerity and bigotry of the later years of Louis XIV. were followed by the license and the infidelity of the Regency; that, while fanatics in 1685 were busied in tearing down Protestant temples, a century later their descendants were murdering Catholic priests and worshiping the Goddess of Reason.

While the voice of praise from almost every quarter greeted the overthrow of heresy, Louis's achievement received at Rome only a tardy and chilling approval.[2] It was said that Innocent XI. condemned the measures used against the Huguenots, and that he had no

Colbert claimed had reached such a development in those countries, that France needed a prohibitive tariff to protect her from their competition.

[1] *Rapport de Breteuil*, 1786.

[2] It was not until March, 1686, that the Pope ordered a Te Deum to be sung over the victory of the faith, and this he did with reluctance. He sent to Louis a formal congratulation at the revocation of the edict, but the representatives of France admitted that the prodigies accomplished in the conversion of heretics were regarded coldly at Rome. — *Lettre de Rome*, September 18, 1685; *Dépêche du duc d'Estrées*, November 13, 1685.

words of praise for armed apostles.[1] Even if he was not averse to persecution, he certainly entertained no affection for the persecutor. The wrangles of Louis XIV. with the Vatican are of little importance in religious history. It was over no question of doctrine that the king quarreled with the Pope. Louis had no thought of imitating Henry VIII.; he was not the man to start schisms, or to think of organizing national churches. He was always the best of Catholics, even when he was on the worst of terms with the Pope. The disputes with Rome, like those with many of the minor powers, grew out of the monarch's inordinate desire to assert his own prerogative. The French kings enjoyed in most of the kingdom what was called the "regale,"—the right to receive the emoluments of a bishopric while it remained vacant. In four southern provinces this right did not exist, or if it existed, it had not been exercised. Louis proceeded to assert this prerogative over the whole of France. The most of the clergy acquiesced, as they acquiesced in whatever the monarch did. Their dependence on the king was greater than on the Pope; from Versailles, and not from Rome, came their preferment. Two only of the bishops refused to recognize the claims made by the sovereign. Innocent XI. was then Pope, a man of learning and of good morals, narrow in his views, pertinacious in his policy, and who had endeavored to reform the abuses he found at Rome. He bore little love for the French or their monarch. At Rome, as elsewhere, the representatives of the great king had not exercised their office with meekness, nor disturbed themselves about the dignity or the sensibilities of those with whom they had to deal. Innocent

[1] *Relazioni dagli Amb. Ven.*

now sustained the protesting bishops in their position. Louis proceeded to exercise the rights he claimed, and the Pope excommunicated those who acted under the royal commands.

This quarrel continued for several years. A general assembly of the Gallican Church was called in 1682, and, under the leadership of Bossuet, it approved the king's right of regale as he asserted it, and adopted four articles which were long the subjects of religious disputation. By them, the assembly declared that the Pope had no authority over the temporal affairs of kings, and no right to depose them; that the privileges of the Gallican Church must be preserved, and that the papal utterances were not beyond question, until they were ratified by a general council of the church.

The French clergy under Louis XIV. may be called monarchical, rather than Gallican. They supported the king in any position he took, as implicitly as did the rest of his subjects. When he quarreled with the Pope, they asserted the right of the church at large to correct the errors of its head. When Louis, towards the end of his reign, became more submissive to papal authority, the views of his clergy assumed a more ultramontane hue.

The articles of the assembly of 1682 were in the highest degree offensive to Innocent XI. With a long array of his predecessors, he held to the doctrine of papal infallibility, which, curiously enough, was never formally recognized by the church in the centuries of faith, and was at last adopted in an age of incredulity. Louis appointed to bishopries those who had subscribed to the four articles. The Pope declared that he could not accept as bishops the heretics

named by the king, and he refused to send the bulls required to complete their ecclesiastical authority.[1] The most zealous of Louis's followers declared that, unless the Pope yielded to reason, the other bishops would consecrate the new incumbents and dispense with papal ratification. Such a step might well have been regarded as the beginning of a schism; it was threatened, but it was not attempted. Innocent was very old; while Louis's representatives expressed no hope that years would bring him wisdom, they undoubtedly anticipated that death would soon relieve the situation.[2]

In this dispute the king was probably in the right. A controversy arose on another question in which he was entirely in the wrong. The foreign ambassadors at Rome had long possessed a right of sanctuary, one of the disorderly mediæval privileges which furnished immunity for the murderers and highwaymen of a town, and rendered the vicinity of an ambassador's house such a district as Whitefriars is described in the "Fortunes of Nigel." This custom was inconsistent with orderly government, with the authority of the

[1] *Correspondance de Rome*, 293, 124. The French retaliated by claiming that Innocent would not confirm the nominees because they would not say that he was infallible.

[2] The details of these controversies can be found in the *Correspondance de Rome* for three years; the proceedings of the Assembly of 1682; the proceedings of the Parliament of Paris, the harangues of its attorney-general; and in innumerable contemporary pamphlets. Michaud, in his *Louis XIV. and Innocent XI.*, has published, in four volumes, a large amount of official correspondence in reference to these disputes. The information thus furnished is not accompanied with much critical sagacity. It is a curious frame of mind that accepts the statements made in letters of an ambassador, in reference to an unfriendly potentate, as conclusive evidence of the facts.

police, and the safety of the citizens. Innocent XI. declared that he would receive no representative of any foreign power, which insisted upon this obnoxious privilege. All the governments save France consented to abandon it, but Louis replied that he did not model his conduct on the example of other sovereigns, and he refused to surrender the right of sanctuary. Why he should have deemed his dignity increased if a Sicilian assassin could murder a man on the Corso, and escape punishment by lodging himself near the palace of the French minister, it is impossible to see. Why he should have thought it worth while on such a ground to irritate a potentate who might be useful to him is equally impossible to discover. During some years, Louis's conduct in many respects can only be characterized as the unbridled wantonness and naughtiness of power. His ambassador proceeded to Rome with directions to surrender no rights that pertained to his position.[1] He entered the city, the Italians complained, surrounded by soldiers and cutthroats, as if he were taking possession of a conquered town. The Pope refused to receive the minister, and declared him excommunicated. He attended mass at the chapel of the French embassy, and the Pope put it under interdict, because the sacrament had there been administered to a man under the ban of the church.[2]

[1] Louis to Lavardin, November 18, 1687.

[2] Correspondence between Lavardin, the French ambassador, and Louis; Italian broadside on Lavardin's conduct, etc.; *Instruction aux ambassadeurs*, t. vi., Rome. Lavardin was authorized to make some slight concession on the right of sanctuary, but as the Pope would not receive him, there was no opportunity for negotiation. Etiquette required that he should kneel in presenting his compliments to the Pope, but his instructions said that, unless he was soon asked to rise, he might cut them very short. Page 290.

Such were the relations between the king and the Pope when events in other lands enabled Innocent XI. to gratify his feelings by aiding the great confederation formed to check the power and humiliate the pride of Louis XIV.

CHAPTER VII.

COALITIONS AGAINST FRANCE.

1680–1697.

If Louis XIV. had died in 1683, a man of forty-five, his record would have been one of unbroken success, unequaled by that of any other king during seven hundred years of French history. In the eighteen years that the government was administered by Mazarin, the treaties of Westphalia and of the Pyrenees had marked the triumphs of French policy, had added new provinces to France, and had given her an influence in Europe superior to that of Spain or the empire. The personal administration of Louis, for almost a quarter of a century, could compare favorably with what was accomplished in his name while he was a minor. The territory of France had been still further increased; and so powerful was that country that it was able to contend on equal terms, not only against any other European state, but against a coalition of all the European states which were then regarded as great powers. These results had been obtained by wars which had not exhausted the land, and by a foreign policy which had usually been sagacious. Great men, both in politics and literature, had made illustrious the forty years during which Louis had been a king. Reforms in taxation had lessened the burdens of the people and added to their prosperity;

reforms in administration had increased the order of the country and the efficiency of the army. The persecutions of the Huguenots were indications of a narrow belief, but thus far they had not been sufficient to attract the special attention of posterity.[1] History might have chastened the expressions of adulation which contemporaries lavished upon Louis XIV., but it would have been forced to admit that his rule had made France more powerful, and had not rendered her people less happy; that, if the government had been centralized, it had also been better administered; and that the reign was one upon which a patriotic Frenchman might look with pride, and without serious disapproval.

Like many others, Louis XIV. lived too long for his own fame. The last thirty years of his reign throw a light upon his policy, his abilities, and the results of his administration, which modifies his position in history. Our opinion of the monarch is altered, not because he was unfortunate, but because he brought his misfortunes upon himself. It was in these years that he revoked the Edict of Nantes; that he united Europe against France by a tyrannical and short-sighted policy; that he brought his kingdom to the verge of ruin in the endeavor to establish his grandson on the Spanish throne.

Men like William of Orange had opposed the treaty of Nimeguen on account of the additional territory which it secured for France, and because they believed that Louis would not rest content with what he had obtained. The result showed that their apprehensions were justified. Peace had hardly been declared when the French began to make further acquisitions, under

[1] This statement would have been true in 1682.

the guise of judicial proceedings. The king had a taste for legal technicalities, on which to rest the demands which his ambition suggested. Territorial aggrandizement under the plea of national sympathies, of political propaganda, or community of race, is a more modern procedure. Louis's claims, from the inheritance of the empire of Philip II. down to the lordship of a village in Flanders, were based upon some special pleading, upon the construction to be put upon a will, a charter, or a treaty. This was both annoying and alarming to his neighbors. Few private estates would be safe from contention, if the statute of limitations did not silence obsolete claims. It was impossible to say upon what territory some claim of right would be devised for Louis XIV., and equally impossible to say that he would not attempt to enforce it.

The years between the treaty of Nimeguen and the formation of the league of Augsburg were filled with lawsuits of this nature, brought by the king against his neighbors. Louvois was at the height of his power, and he controlled the foreign policy of France. The animosities which he excited, when added to the apprehension of Louis's ambition and the resentment aroused by the persecution of the Huguenots, united Europe against that country.

More than thirty years had elapsed since the peace of Westphalia. During that time France had occupied the acquisitions which she had then obtained, and the peaceful acquiescence of all concerned would seem to have settled any question as to what territory was ceded. The conduct of the parties is the best adjustment of a boundary, whether the question be the frontier of a state or the location of a line fence. It

was now claimed, however, that France had not received all to which she was entitled by the terms of that treaty as well as by the more recent one of Nimeguen. Such controversies were submitted to French local courts, whose decisions naturally were in favor of their own country. The judgments of these tribunals, by which towns, cities, and duchies were declared reunited to France, were promptly followed by the enforcement of French sovereignty over the disputed district. The acquisitions thus made were not very important, but the process was irritating. Territories were abstracted which had recognized the jurisdiction of German electors, of Sweden, and of Spain, and those various governments, though little weakened, were greatly angered. The German diet asked of Louis to state the extent of the claims which he intended to enforce. The only answer they received was that the monarch purposed to obtain what had been ceded by the treaties. The diet agreed to submit to the judgments which the courts of reunion had pronounced before 1681, but the decisions were as elastic as the claims. Louvois began to erect a fortress on a bit of land that had not been reunited. The Germans protested, and the minister wrote the Parliament of Metz to send him a decree covering the territory in question, and to antedate it. The decree was forthcoming, duly certified as of a date six years earlier, and the minister went on with his fortifications.[1] Such a procedure was amusing, but the amusement of baiting one's neighbors may be carried too far.

In 1681, the important city of Strasbourg was added to these new acquisitions. There was no treaty

[1] Louvois to Séxe, November 27, 1687; to La Goupillière, December 3; *D. G.*, 800.

sufficiently elastic to cover this ancient republic, and the French took it by the strong hand. Money was freely used to obtain the good-will of influential burghers, and the citizens of a commonwealth which had existed for more than four centuries, seeing that resistance was useless, consented without much reluctance to merge their individuality in the French kingdom. They were given liberal terms. Most of their civic privileges were preserved; they were allowed, to a large extent, freedom of trade and freedom from imposts; while the cathedral was restored to the service of the Catholic Church, the Protestants were secured in their religious privileges.[1]

Strasbourg was really a part of Alsace, and necessary for the safety of that province; nor did its citizens lose by the surrender of an independence which, in the changed condition of Europe, could not have endured much longer. But on the day that Strasbourg was united to a kingdom of which it was to remain a contented member for two centuries, another acquisition was made that served no purpose except to excite the apprehensions of Europe. After a series of obscure negotiations, Casal, a powerful fortress in northern Italy, was turned over to the French armies. This was a new quarter for Louis's activity. The numerous pamphlets, which declared that he aspired to universal monarchy, seemed to derive plausibility from the seizure of a town whose only value was as a basis for Italian conquest.[2]

These appropriations of neighboring territory at last

[1] *Documents inédits concernant l'Alsace;* Correspondence of the Department of War.

[2] *La conduite de la France; La monarchie universelle de Louis XIV.; Soupirs de la France esclave*, etc.

led to a petty war with Spain. Spain alone could make no opposition to the armies of France; the Emperor was engaged in a war with Turkey; England was subsidized, and the rest of Europe was not yet ready to take up arms. In 1684, a truce of twenty years was made, which left Louis in occupation of Strasbourg, Luxemburg, and all the territory which had been reunited to France by decrees rendered prior to August 1, 1681. His rights were not formally and finally conceded, but if either wisdom or moderation had characterized his policy, he would have remained in undisturbed possession, and these important acquisitions would have been permanently incorporated with France. Instead of such a course, the next few years were filled with acts alike so offensive and so useless, that they seem like wanton attempts to excite the indignation of Europe. Certainly they were not the measures of a wise, a just, or a magnanimous sovereign.

Genoa had long been viewed by Louis XIV. with an unfavorable eye. Her only offense was that her people were apprehensive of his policy, and criticised his conduct with unbecoming frankness.[1] Even this was not allowed by the counsels which prevailed at Versailles. The citizens were warned of the fate in which such sentiments would involve them. They were ordered to restore to the descendant of a political offender the property of his ancestor, with interest for a century; they were directed to discontinue building galleys and strengthening their navy, because their sympathies with Spain rendered such conduct suspicious.

Genoa had fallen from the position which she once

[1] Estrades to Louvois, December 12, 1681.

held. Her merchants no longer controlled the trade of the East; her fleets no longer commanded the waters of the Mediterranean; but she was still a free and an independent state, at peace with all the world. The republic declined to comply with requests which proceeded on the theory that she owed obedience to Louis XIV., as much as did Marseilles or Calais. The punishment was prompt. A fleet sailed from Toulon and bombarded the town. Ten thousand bombs were thrown into an unprotected city, because it had declined to obey the arbitrary commands of a foreign sovereign. A large portion of Genoa was destroyed. The palaces of the doge and of the great nobles, which had long been the admiration of Europe; the warehouses of the merchants, whose ships carried the products of civilization to exchange for the luxuries of the East and the fruits of the West; the houses of thousands of humble citizens, were consumed by the flames. The light of the conflagration was so powerful that by it one could read at night on the French vessels stationed far out in the bay.[1] "The princes of Europe have learned that one does not offend with impunity the greatest monarch of the world," wrote Louis himself, quoting with approval the sentiment of one of his ministers.[2] The Genoese were informed that this punishment would be followed by still severer chastisement if they did not submit. The city was in no position to contend with Louis XIV. In conformity with his commands, the chief officials visited the great monarch and presented the apologies of the citizens. The doge, to whom the words of his address were dictated, informed Louis that in valor,

[1] Louvois to Créqui, June 1, 1684.

[2] Louis to Estrades, November 19, 1684.

greatness, and magnanimity he excelled all kings of history. These expressions of adulation, the pompous ceremony, the solemn parade, gratified the vanity of a king whose only real grievance was that the Genoese had questioned his omnipotence and criticised his wisdom. By the laws of Genoa, the doge was not allowed to leave the city. He was shown the splendors of Versailles, and asked what seemed to him most wonderful. "That I should be here myself," was his reply.

Savoy, like Genoa, was treated as if it were a tributary state. The duke's ministers were chosen for him, and his policy was dictated to him. He wished to take a trip to Venice, but the French ambassador told him that this would be distasteful to Louis XIV. "I did not suppose that such a bagatelle would be even known to the king," said the young duke; but he obeyed and remained at home.[1] He desired to send a minister to Madrid. He was informed that this could not be allowed, and no ambassador was sent.[2]

In a far more serious matter he was forced to submit to foreign dictation. In the latter part of 1685, Louis was in the flush of victory over the Huguenots. The Edict of Nantes had just been repealed, the efforts of his soldiers had produced hundreds of thousands of conversions, and a taste for persecution had been fostered by evil advisers and unwise applause. In the valleys of the Alps lived a few thousand simple-minded people, who might claim to be the religious descendants of the ancient sect of the Waldenses, but whose faith had long been identified with the more modern Protestantism of the Reformation. Neither their retired life nor their pure morals had

[1] Estrades to Louis, October 25, 1684.

[2] *Correspondance de Savoy.*

secured them peace, but the last persecution to which the Vaudois were subjected had been checked by the strong hand of Cromwell. Since then they had enjoyed thirty years of tranquillity, and had no reason to fear ill-treatment at the hands of their present sovereign. The Duke of Savoy, though a boy in years, possessed the sagacity which for centuries has been found in his extraordinary family; he had inherited the intellect of his ancestors, without the bigotry which they had sometimes shown, and he did not wish to disturb peaceable and industrious subjects. But Louis XIV. had extirpated heresy in France, and he now resolved to destroy it among his neighbors. First the letters from Versailles held up to the young duke the great achievements of the French king in the cause of religion, and suggested that there was an opportunity for him to imitate this example. The prudent duke expressed the warmest admiration at the overthrow of heresy in France, but he showed no desire to undertake it in Piedmont. Such remissness was not allowed. Victor Amadeus was soon informed that, unless he expelled the heretics from his domains, he would be visited with serious marks of the royal displeasure. The French armies assembled on the frontier of Piedmont, and the duke saw that there was no refuge but submission. He accordingly ordered the Vaudois to leave his dominions, but his sincerity was so distrusted that he was not allowed to enforce his own commands. A French army entered Piedmont, and proceeded to invade the distant valleys occupied by the sectaries. They met with a brave and a fruitless resistance. Villages were destroyed, men and women killed; the devastation of the Palatinate was anticipated in the valleys of the Vaudois.

At last the French commander could send a satisfactory report to Louvois: "This country is completely desolated; there are neither people nor animals left. I hope that we shall remain here until the race is entirely extirpated. If the soldiers do not kill those who are taken with arms in their hands, they are sent to the hangman." [1] All were not killed: some ten thousand men and women were made prisoners. This number was soon reduced by disease. "These maladies," wrote Louis, "will relieve the duke from the trouble he has had in the care of these rebels, and I doubt not that he will be easily consoled for the loss of subjects whom he can replace by better and more faithful ones." [2] Victor received an offer for the purchase of the captives, to be used by the Turks as galley slaves, and if he had accepted it, he could have pleaded that Louis XIV. had set the example of sending Protestants to the galleys. He declined to follow that precedent, and turned over the Vaudois prisoners to the Protestant canton of Berne.[3]

Louis's policy had at last consolidated all Europe against him. In the early part of his reign, almost every Protestant state in Germany was an ally of France. During the long war with Holland, Sweden remained constant to his interests. In Amsterdam an influential party among the merchants inclined to the French alliance, and resisted the persistent efforts of the Prince of Orange to protract the war.

[1] Catinat to Louvois, May 9, 1686.

[2] Louis to Marquis d'Arcy, November 8, 1686.

[3] The memoirs and letters of Catinat and *Correspondance de Savoy, Aff. Etr.*, are the authorities for this lamentable chapter of history. A full account of it is given in Rousset's *Histoire de Louvois.*

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the persecution of the Huguenots, made an enemy of every Protestant state in Europe. Wherever the refugees went, they related the story of their wrongs and of their sufferings. The churches and the market-places of Amsterdam and Berlin, of Stockholm and Copenhagen, resounded with tales of the woes of Protestant brethren, inflicted upon them by the wicked king of France. The victim of bigotry showed the wounds that he had received from his cruel persecutors; he told of a daughter languishing in prison, of a brother toiling in the galleys.

The zealous Catholic joined with the zealous Protestant in condemnation of the French king. Louis had affronted the Pope; he had seized the revenues of the church; he had insisted that the quarters of his ambassador at Rome should continue the safe resort for murderers, thieves, and harlots, who could thus practice their wickedness with impunity almost in the presence of the Holy Father. The ministers of the Emperor declared that Louis would gladly see the infidels in possession of Vienna; that he sympathized with the policy of the Great Turk, and imitated his conduct and his cruelty. Catholics and Protestants, republics and monarchies, were eager to combine against a sovereign who was the common enemy of all.[1]

In July, 1686, the league of Augsburg was formed,

[1] See, for these various grounds of accusation, *La conduite de la France, Dialogue entre Gènes et Alger, villes foudroyées, Les larmes de l'Angleterre, La cour de France turbanisée*, etc., etc. The number of such pamphlets issued about this period is prodigious. I have given a statement of their complaints, without discussing how far they were justified.

by which the Emperor, Spain, Sweden, and most of the German princes bound themselves to maintain an army of sixty thousand men, and to act in unison against any infraction of the treaties in force.[1] Such a purpose seemed pacific, but it was easy to foresee that the course of events would soon involve the league in actual conflict with France. Louis was sufficiently sagacious to appreciate the gravity of this combination, and his conduct was now characterized by greater moderation. The Duke of Savoy again undertook a journey to Venice, and the French did not hazard offending him by any further prohibitions. The spirit of insubordination to the would-be master was visible elsewhere than in Piedmont. Louis sought to convert the twenty years' truce into a permanent treaty, but to this neither Spain nor the Emperor would consent.

While all Europe was in this condition of unrest, a change in the political situation brought the agitation to a crisis. The Elector of Cologne had long been devoted to the interests of France, and Cardinal Fürstenberg, the Bishop of Strasbourg, had been chosen as his coadjutor. This would ordinarily have secured for him the succession, and Fürstenberg was the devoted servant of the French king, to whom he owed his bishopric and his cardinal's hat. In June, 1688, the elector died. A rule of the chapter made the Pope master of the situation. By this provision, a candidate who already held a bishopric required two thirds of all the votes of the chapter, while otherwise a majority was sufficient. The Pope could dispense with the requirement, and this he usually did without

[1] Dumont, *Corps Dip.* Spain and Sweden were members of the league by virtue of the possessions which they held in the empire.

question, for it was not often that one was chosen to so exalted a position who did not already hold important ecclesiastical offices. But while he had the power to grant a dispensation, he had an unquestionable right to refuse it. Louis was now to find how short-sighted was the policy by which he had alienated Innocent XI. It was essential to France that the Elector of Cologne should be her ally. His territories were important, both from their size and from their situation; he could send twelve thousand men into the field. To have a friendly elector was a matter far more important than the gratification of an obstinate vanity in preserving useless and odious privileges. Louis had insisted that his ambassador at Rome should yield nothing of his prerogatives, and by his persistence in this demand he lost the Elector of Cologne as an ally. Prince Clement of Bavaria was brought forward as the candidate of the opponents of France. Out of twenty-four votes, Fürstenberg had thirteen, and Prince Clement nine. Unless Fürstenberg could obtain a dispensation, he was not canonically elected, and the choice of the elector fell to the Pope himself. In this emergency Louis sent a special messenger to Innocent. He offered to abandon the privileges of his ambassador, and to consent that Prince Clement should be chosen coadjutor and secured in the succession, if the Pope would confirm the election of Fürstenberg. Unless this were done, the Pope was warned that his conduct would excite a general war in Europe; Prince Clement, he was reminded, was not twenty years old, and had never taken orders, though he already held two bishoprics; the Holy Father was adjured to prevent the scandal of such a choice, and the waste of Christian

blood that would result from it.[1] His enemies declared that Innocent XI. was not a good Catholic, but no one ever claimed that he was not a good hater. A general war waged against Louis XIV. had no terrors for the Pope. He refused even to receive the king's envoy. When informed of this, Louis sent a violent letter denouncing Innocent's conduct. "God will punish him that is guilty," said the Pope when he had heard the letter read, and without leaving the room he directed that the bull should be sent forthwith which designated Prince Clement as archbishop and Elector of Cologne.[2] In the long conflict between Innocent and Louis, the Pope was enabled to inflict the last and the most injurious blow. Of all the king's enemies, it is doubtful whether any two did him more harm than the Pope and the Duke of Savoy, whom he had domineered and browbeaten from mere wantonness. Louis declared that he would support the rights of Cardinal Fürstenberg; the French army, under the command of the dauphin, advanced to the Rhine and laid siege to Philipsburg, and a nine years' war was formally begun.

Though the French king was nominally the aggressor, it was certain that war would soon have been declared upon him. The position of Europe was such that he had either to surrender the acquisitions of the last ten years, or gain what advantage he could from the initiative in a conflict that was inevitable. He had been severely criticised because he began the attack in Germany, and left the Prince of Orange to prosecute his expedition against James II. undisturbed.

[1] *Instructions à Chamlay*, July 6, 1688; Louvois to Chamlay, July 23, *Papiers de Chamlay*. It was claimed that Prince Clement was but fifteen. — *Cor. de Rome*, 318, 319.

[2] *Nouvelles de Rome*, October 3, 1688.

Undoubtedly the acquisition of the English crown by Louis's bitterest enemy was the severest blow that he could receive, but it is not probable that any movement of his armies would have prevented it. He was long aware of the purpose of the Prince of Orange. Of this he had informed James, and he had notified the Dutch that any act of hostility against that sovereign he should regard as an attack upon himself. James had complained bitterly of Louis's interference, and had proclaimed offensively that he was in no need of such protection.[1] He was not the faithful servant to Louis that his brother had been, and if he had remained on the throne it is more than probable that he would have been found acting with the league of Augsburg against the French.[2] Louis, however, did not allow his conduct to be governed by pique, and he continued to act in James's interest. He was, indeed, far from anticipating the sudden and complete success which awaited William in England. He believed that the English people would remain constant to their sovereign, and he did not expect that in a few months William of Orange would be their acknowledged king.[3]

In this he was wrong, but it is impossible to see how he could have prevented this result. In the years that were past he might, indeed, have so shaped his policy that it would have been impossible for William to equip an army in Holland, with which to try his fortune in England. By his persecution of the Huguenots, and by regulations directed against Dutch trade,

[1] Louis comments on this in his letter to Barillon, September 30, 1688.

[2] *Négociations d'Avaux*, vi. 276.

[3] Proofs of this are abundant in Louis's correspondence.

Louis had alienated his friends in Holland. His ambassador, the Count of Avaux, wrote repeatedly that by reason of these measures the Dutch were rallying as one man around the Prince of Orange. Louis answered that he did not purpose to be dictated to by the merchants of Amsterdam as to the manner in which he should treat his own subjects, and that to change his commercial policy would show a feebleness unbecoming his dignity.[1] When the Dutch had been soured by years of such conduct, when every movement of Louis XIV. since the peace of Nimeguen had bettered the position of his wily antagonist, it was too late in the summer of 1688 to save James II. The Hollanders were irritated with Louis, and were willing to abet the Prince of Orange in his designs. The English nation was eager for a change. If William had sailed over in a yacht, with only a body-guard of followers, it is probable that his expedition would have been successful. It was not the army he brought with him that secured him the English crown. He succeeded because England wished to be rid of James II.

The blame which has been lavished on Louis because he did not begin the war by an invasion of the Low Countries seems unjust.[2] The result of the invasion of Holland in 1672, when she was without an ally, did not encourage such an attempt in 1688, when all Europe would have taken up arms in her defense. It is certain that William would not have been turned from his purpose, whether the armies of Louis be-

[1] *Nég. d'Avaux*, i. 152, 155, 212, 227 ; vi. 159 *et passim.*

[2] Such is the view taken by M. Rousset in his *Histoire de Louvois.* Lord Macaulay is the most familiar name of those who have claimed that Louis made a fatal mistake, and that he might have prevented the expedition of the Prince of Orange.

sieged cities in Flanders or cities on the Rhine.[1] Because the French laid siege to Philipsburg, instead of to Namur or Maestricht, he was enabled to prepare his expedition with more deliberation, to sail with a larger fleet, to take with him a larger army. He had little need of either. Not all the fleets nor all the armies of France could have kept James II. on the throne, from which his subjects were ready to expel him. The success of the Prince of Orange was sure, unless James abandoned his endeavors to overthrow the laws, the liberties, and the religion of England. That was the only danger which William had to fear, and fortunately for him it was not a serious one.

The flag at the masthead of the frigate on which William of Orange embarked declared that he would maintain the Protestant religion. Yet the papal blessing probably accompanied his expedition, as much as that of William of Normandy six hundred years before. Innocent was told that he was aiding a prince, who only waited a favorable wind to deprive a Catholic sovereign of his crown and his life.[2] The French ambassador truly replied that Innocent's only apprehension as to William's undertaking was lest it might be unsuccessful.[3] It has been claimed that Innocent was unaware of William's plans, and that he believed the prince to be collecting forces with which to resist Louis's endeavors in behalf of Cardinal Fürstenberg. The pontiff was far too sagacious to be ignorant of

[1] Avaux admitted that, even if Louis should lay siege to Brussels, this would not deter William from his undertaking. — Avaux to Louis, October 7, 1688.

[2] Louis to Cardinal d'Estrées, October 11, 1688.

[3] Dispatch of Lavardin, December 27, 1688; *Correspondance de Rome.*

the object of this expedition, when it was stated in every court in Europe, and believed by every sovereign except the one against whom it was directed.[1] He knew that the aid which he gave the league of Augsburg, and the choice that he made of an Elector of Cologne, were of assistance to William of Orange. But the Holy Father loved James II. much less than he hated Louis XIV. Probably, also, he estimated at their true value the efforts of James to restore England to the fold of the church, which excited the hopes of the courtiers of Versailles.[2] He attached more importance to the league against France than to James's endeavors for the conversion of the English.

Philipsburg surrendered after a siege of a little over a month. Whatever advantage the French gained by this was more than counterbalanced by the devastation of the Palatinate in the following year. The responsibility for this act of barbarism must rest equally upon Louvois who advised it, and Louis who allowed

[1] The official correspondence shows that the object of William's expedition was repeatedly stated in the papal court. Innocent may have claimed that he did not believe it, but if he was blind, it was because he did not wish to see. — Estrées to Louis, September 10, 1688; Louis to Estrées, October 11, 1688; Lavardin to Louis, February 1, 1689, etc.; *Correspondance de Rome.* The public declaration of the Pope in favor of James, and such dispatches as those of Estrées to Louvois, December 18, 1687, prove nothing to the contrary. Innocent was obliged to observe a certain official propriety in speaking of a Catholic sovereign attacked by a Protestant prince, but he was not an unsophisticated neophyte in European politics, unaware of the purposes of others or the results of his own acts.

[2] See, for illustrations of this, the journals of Dangeau and of Sourches, *passim.* It is amusing to observe how the opinion of these wiseacres on James's achievements for the cause of religion changed after they had cost him his throne.

it. It was urged as a pretext, that to lay this region waste would make an invasion of Alsace more difficult. It served only to make the enemies of France more resolute. Louvois's motive was to intimidate his adversaries, and he only succeeded in irritating them. The reports of cities burned, fields ravaged, churches desecrated, peasants and townspeople beggared and left to starve, made the soldier fight with more zeal, and the taxpayer contribute with more willingness, against an enemy who did not respect the laws of God or of humanity. "Once," said a pamphleteer, "the French were esteemed a humane and civilized nation, but now a Frenchman and a cannibal are regarded as much the same thing."[1] Like so many of the acts which Louis countenanced under the advice of his ferocious minister of war, the burning of the Palatinate was a blunder as well as a crime.

The Duke of Savoy revenged himself for the treatment he had received by joining the alliance against France, and the situation of his territory made him a dangerous enemy. The French now had to support armies in Catalonia, Piedmont, the Low Countries, and on the Rhine. On the sea, their fleets were powerful enough to contend, almost on equal terms, with those of England and Holland combined. The French won the victory of Beachy Head and suffered the defeat of La Hogue. Notwithstanding these prodigious exertions, the war was not waged in a manner to insure a speedy and successful conclusion. In Flanders, the Marshal of Luxembourg won in successive years the brilliant victories of Fleurus, Steenkerke, and Neerwinden. They were productive of much glory, and of very little else. Luxembourg inflicted

[1] *Soupirs de la France.*

stinging defeats upon William, but the close of the campaigns found the respective armies in nearly the same position that they had occupied at the beginning. In 1691, Mons was captured. The siege was conducted by Vauban, and when the city surrendered he received a present of one hundred thousand francs for his services, and he was invited to dine at the king's table. It was the first time that the great engineer had been thus honored, and he esteemed it a reward far more valuable than the money.[1]

In 1692, the strong fortress of Namur was besieged and taken by the French army, under the personal command of the king. Of all his conquests this gratified him the most. Namur was a place of great strength; it had been deemed impregnable; it was defended by one of the most famous of living engineers; the army of William III. was encamped near by, but was unable to relieve the town. The victory was enthusiastically applauded by Louis's subjects, and he did not hesitate to express his own approbation of his own conduct.[2] In his delight he condescended to patronize his opponent. Some criticised the Prince of Orange, he said, because he did not hazard a battle in the endeavor to relieve Namur. "There was, however, wisdom in this decision," he added. "The experience of the past had shown that it was useless to oppose a design which the king carried out in person, and William judged Namur lost as soon as he knew that Louis was laying siege to it."[3]

[1] *Journal de Dangeau*, April 9, 1691. Louis was present during the siege.

[2] *Rélation de ce qui s'est passé au siége de Namur; Œuvres de Louis XIV.*, iv. 341.

[3] *Ib.*, 390.

The monarch's jealousy of William as a soldier led him at times to speak of his rival with less magnanimity. In the preceding campaign he criticised the conduct of one who certainly was not his inferior in personal courage. A bomb killed one of William's soldiers near the spot where the king was dining, and, like a sensible man, he got out of the way of unnecessary danger, and finished his meal elsewhere. "I am surprised," wrote Louis, "that this should have disturbed the repast of the Prince of Orange, because it seems to me that, since he had begun his dinner in that locality, he should have finished it there."[1] The criticism is characteristic of the critic.

The capture of Namur was the last of the victories won by Louis in person, and the following campaign saw his farewell appearance at the head of his armies. With 110,000 men, and every appliance alike for war and luxury, he entered the Low Countries. The forces of the allies were already in the field, and he found that he could not invest Liége except at the risk of an engagement. The army of William III. was not over 50,000 strong, and it was possible to inflict upon him a crushing defeat that might go far towards ending the war. The hesitation, the moral timidity, that had kept Louis from risking a pitched battle during the many years that he had accompanied his armies, controlled him now. He announced that the Rhine was the critical point where the forces of France must be concentrated, and that he must sacrifice his own plans to the interests of the state. In vain did the Marshal of Luxembourg fall on his knees before his sovereign, and implore him not to let this great opportunity escape. Thirty thousand

[1] Louis to Marshal of Luxembourg, August 14, 1691.

men were sent to the Rhine, and the king at once returned to Versailles. So sudden and so unexpected was his departure, that the officers had barely time to present their farewell respects. The army of the Rhine, under the command of the dauphin, even though thus reinforced, accomplished absolutely nothing. With the forces that remained, Luxembourg attacked William and won the bloody victory of Neerwinden.

Louis never again appeared in the field. The reasons that he gave for declining an engagement, and which perhaps he believed really controlled him, could not remove his secret dissatisfaction that he had again lost the opportunity of winning a pitched battle. The pamphlets of his enemies were filled with sneers at his conduct, which they charged to faint-heartedness, to physical cowardice, to the fact that he was under petticoat government and Mme. de Maintenon wanted him to go home. Certainly he did not read these libels. He read but little, and read only what told of his praise. Yet, though he heard nothing save the sound of flattery and the voice of courtiers, the dim consciousness of hostile criticism penetrated his mind. The officers, who rushed to present their compliments at his departure, had not been able to conceal their amazement at his conduct, even when they bowed the lowest. The time was past when superiority in numbers, discipline, and equipment made victory certain for the French. Louis felt that if he appeared again in the field, he might expose himself to repulses, to failures, to sneers, which would be felt though they never reached his ear. He liked also to be accompanied by his court when he took the field, and Mme. de Maintenon was very loath to undertake such journeys. She was getting old. She was trou-

bled by rheumatism. She complained bitterly of the bad roads, the bad lodging, the fatigue and discomfort of these expeditions. It was not difficult for her to induce the king to abandon the rôle of a soldier.[1]

Death removed from the scene the greatest minister and the greatest general of France. Louvois preserved his influence over his master, but his favor diminished. The imperious character of the minister increased with years, and at times it involved him in conflicts with a king who was very tenacious of his authority. The war had not been marked by the unbroken success which had long attended the French armies. When a reverse was sustained, there were many ready to blame the despotic and unpopular secretary of war. He had also an insidious and most dangerous enemy in Mme. de Maintenon. Her influence over Louis increased with years, and she was usually present at the conferences of the king with his ministers. Rarely did she express an opinion, and never unless it was asked; but she observed if she did not talk, and a judicious word, dropped when alone with the king, might go far to defeat a project which she disapproved, or to injure a person whom she disliked. She regarded Louvois as violent, dangerous, and impious. He took no steps to propitiate her; he had not the faculty by which one stoops to conquer. Labor, harassment, and anxiety told upon him. On July 8, 1691, he was greatly chagrined at receiving news of a shameful defeat suffered in Pied-

[1] For Louis's last appearance with his armies, see *Mém. de St. Simon*, i. 82–86; *Journal de Dangeau*, iv. 300–306; *Mém. de Berwick*, 338; *Mém. de St. Hilaire; Mém. de Sourches*, iv. 210. All were eyewitnesses. — Louis to Lorges, June 1 and 7, 1693; *Cor. Gén. de Mme. de Maintenon*, iii. 370–377 *et pas.*

mont, and due to the inefficiency and cowardice of the officers in command. On the 16th, he worked with the king as usual. He showed signs of illness, and Louis bade him retire. An hour later he was dead. He was but fifty, and for thirty years he had been a minister of Louis XIV.

So sudden a death excited grave suspicions that he had been poisoned, but there is nothing to prove that this was the fact. Though he had done much for the military development of France, he was little mourned. The master whom he served zealously, though not always wisely, was glad to be rid of a servant who had become oppressive. Louis wished to show that the great king was not dependent on great ministers. "Tell the king of England," he said to a messenger from James, presenting his regrets at Louvois's death, "that I have lost a good minister, but his interests and mine will not fare any the worse."[1]

Mme. de Maintenon seems to have felt a gloomy satisfaction that her enemy had gone to his account, "unhouseled, unaneled, and with all his imperfections on his head," and that, without opportunity for confession and absolution, he would probably go to hell. A little later the Duke of La Feuillade died suddenly, and she wrote: "He had only time to say, 'Lord have mercy on me.' It was more than the other had, but I do not know that it was enough."[2]

In January, 1695, the Marshal of Luxembourg died, and ended a career illustrious by glory, and stained by vice. There was no great general to take his place, and the war languished. Namur was recap-

[1] *Journal de Dangeau*, July 17, 1691.

[2] Mme. de Maintenon to Mme. de Fontevrault, September, 1691.

tured by William, but, except this success, neither side made any decided gain. Though the contest was prosecuted with little vigor, it was carried on with great barbarity. Such cruelties had not been practiced on non-combatants since the Thirty Years' War. The country occupied by hostile armies was subjected to ruinous contributions; if they were not paid, the delinquents were punished with fire and the sword. When a city or a town was abandoned and there was no hope of further plunder, it was almost a matter of course to set it on fire. This license made marauders of the soldiers, and guerrillas of the peasants. The soldier who wandered from his company was shot by the peasant lurking behind some tree or hedge. In reprisal a hamlet was burned, and women and children were murdered or left to starve. In the riot of such scenes, the invaders as well as the inhabitants lost their lives. Many got drunk, and were burned in the flames which they had themselves kindled. A roof or wall would go down, and bury in the ruins a party of soldiers carousing among the wine casks of the cellar. Cities were bombarded, not with any hope of forcing them to surrender, but simply to teach them good manners. It was in vain that Vauban complained that these practices wasted ammunition, wearied the troops, exasperated the enemy, and did not gain an inch of ground for the king.[1] The ministers were more merciless than the generals.

Both parties indulged in these modes of warfare. The English ships bombarded many of the cities on the French coast. They inflicted misery and loss on innocent inhabitants, and gained nothing for themselves. In return for this, the French shelled the city

[1] Vauban to Louvois, June 27, 1691.

of Brussels for two days, and it was estimated that the flames destroyed 20,000,000 livres of property.[1] Such cruelties brought the war no nearer to an end. Little was done in the Low Countries after the loss of Namur. On the Rhine hardly anything more important than plundering a city or burning a town was accomplished during nine years of languid warfare.

The dauphin commanded the army of the Rhine for several years, but he manifested no talent as a warrior. He was fond of riding, and every day he devoted a few hours to galloping in hot haste to survey his outposts and picket lines; after this there was occasionally a council of war, where he never opened his mouth, and where no decision was reached more important than to send a courier to Versailles for further orders; he then gave the password for the morrow, returned to his tent, and occupied himself in playing cards.[2]

In fact, all parties were exhausted by a contest extending over so many years. The financial situation of France was deplorable. The expenses far exceeded the receipts, and the devices to increase the revenue were generally of a most deplorable nature. Innumerable offices were created and sold; the currency was debased; the king and those who had plate sent it to the mint to be melted for the public need. Commerce was so reduced that the duties yielded much less than formerly. The crops were exceedingly poor during a number of years. Protracted wars, enormous armies, bad government, religious persecution, injudicious taxation, unwise commercial regulations, de-

[1] *Mém. de Berwick*, 342; *Mém. de Sourches*, v. 35.

[2] *Journal de Dangeau.* He attended the dauphin during the campaign of 1690.

stroyed the prosperity which might have been enjoyed by an industrious people dwelling in a fertile land. France was incapable of any great exertion. Fortunately for her, her enemies were not in much better condition, and they were now weakened by an important defection. In 1696, the Duke of Savoy was induced to desert the alliance against Louis XIV. He obtained advantageous terms, and he must have reflected with pleasure on the change in his condition since he was counseled by Louis and browbeaten by Louvois. The French abandoned Casal. They surrendered Pignerol, a fortress important from its position and its strength, and which had been gained for France by Richelieu. They restored all the places which they had captured during the war. The duke was promised that his minister should receive at the French court the same treatment as the representatives of crowned heads, a distinction which he had long supplicated in vain. His daughter was betrothed to the Duke of Burgundy, the heir to the French throne.[1] What, perhaps, he prized most of all, he might hope to be free from incessant and domineering interference. As he exchanged the ratification of the treaty with the Count of Tessé, he said to him: "Ask your king to send us now an ambassador who will leave us in peace with our sheep, our wives, and our mistresses. From the day I had the use of my reason until this unfortunate war, there was never a week that some demand was not made on me as to my conduct or that of my family; and when I had acceded to nine demands out of ten, I was threatened unless I would agree to the tenth."[2] Ambassadors,

[1] *Actes de la Paix de Ryswick*, t. i.

[2] Tessé to king, July 1, 1696.

as he well knew, had only followed instructions from Versailles, but the conflict in which he had engaged proved for the Duke of Savoy a war of independence. In the future he was allowed to govern his own state without foreign interference.

The defection of Savoy inclined the desires of Louis's opponents towards peace, and he offered terms which were all that they could demand, and more than the fortunes of war had entitled them to expect. The king was exceedingly anxious to bring the conflict to an end. His people were distressed, his finances disordered; the war was not productive of glory; he no longer took the field himself, and gratified his pride by the capture of some strong city in Flanders. The health of Charles II. was very precarious, and Louis could hope to obtain little from the Spanish succession, if it became vacant while he was at war with Spain.[1] He made offers which were acceptable to William III., his bitterest enemy, and through his influence the allies were induced to agree to them.

In his first proposition, Louis had offered to include Strasbourg among the cities which he surrendered. It would have been a bitter sacrifice for the pride of his people. "Strasbourg," wrote Vauban, "should no more be relinquished than the Faubourg St. Germain."[2] The delays of Spain and the Emperor allowed the French to capture Barcelona, and after that important victory they refused to give up Strasbourg. The terms on which the peace

[1] The letters of Mme. de Maintenon are full of her desire for peace. "I would give all for peace," she wrote in 1693. "We have only to pray, and to await what it will please God to do." — *Cor. Gén.*, iii. 383.

[2] Mém. of Vauban to the king.

of Ryswick was actually made, in September, 1697, were, however, humiliating for France. All the acquisitions of twenty years, with the exception of Strasbourg, were lost. From Dinant, of which Louis had possessed himself almost as soon as the treaty of Nimeguen was ratified, to Barcelona, which was captured just before the treaty of Ryswick was signed, all was surrendered. Luxemburg, and numerous cities, duchies, counties, and villages which had been annexed by the courts of reunion, were now given back, and Louis promised that he would not again adopt such modes of procedure. All that had been captured during the war was also restored. The claim of Fürstenberg to the electorate of Cologne, which was one of the pretexts for hostilities, had long been abandoned. It was not even mentioned in the treaty. Other conditions of the peace were not injurious, though some of them were distasteful to the king's pride. The Dutch were allowed to sell their herrings, and the duties on their goods, and on their ships trading in France, were reduced. With France at this period, as with China in our day, one gained commercial privileges at the cannon's mouth. William of Orange was recognized as king of Great Britain, and Louis promised that he would give no aid to any claimant for that throne. This provision, in an evil day for his own fortunes, he afterwards saw fit to violate. He would not agree to remove James II. from St. Germain, though, if he had expelled that unfortunate sovereign from France, his overburdened people would have been saved the expense of supporting an additional court, and he might have escaped having England as an enemy in the war of the Spanish Succession. The interests of the country were sacrificed to a display of royal courtesy.

On another question Louis was firm. He would make no concessions to the Protestants in France. The treaty provided also that the Catholic religion should be allowed in the territories which he surrendered, and he thus secured the spiritual welfare of those whom he could not retain as subjects. These provisions obtained for religion, and the retention of Strasbourg, were the only advantages which Louis was able to claim from the peace of Ryswick.[1] The conditions of the treaty were distasteful to a proud-spirited people, which had always rejoiced when the boundaries of France were extended, and been loath to see them narrowed. Peace was welcome, but it did not seem a satisfactory termination of twenty years of intrigue, and almost ten years of war, that France should be again placed where the peace of Nimeguen had left her. No glory of conquest atoned for heavy taxes and diminished prosperity. "The treaty is more disgraceful than that of Cateau-Cambresis," said Vauban, "which has been considered the most shameful one ever made. We have always beaten the enemy, and yet we make a peace which dishonors the king and the nation."[2]

[1] See his letter to the Archbishop of Paris, January 5, 1698. For the terms of the various treaties and the negotiations in reference to them, see *Actes et Mémoires de la Paix de Ryswick*, 5 vols., and the correspondence of William III. and Louis XIV. published in 1848.

[2] Vauban to Racine, September, 1697.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SPANISH SUCCESSION.

1698–1713.

THE great question of the Spanish Succession had a large influence in bringing Louis to consent to the peace of Ryswick, and to yield up the fruits of twenty years of conquest. The life of Charles II. of Spain had always seemed precarious, but his rapidly increasing infirmities now made it certain that the end was at hand. To secure the whole or some part of the possessions of that empire on which the sun never set had been the object of Louis's life. But if Charles died while France was at war with Spain and the rest of Europe, it was probable that the entire heritage would go to the house of Austria, and the policy of forty years would result in naught.

Hardly had peace been made when this question absorbed the attention of statesmen. Negotiations and treaties went for nothing at the last; all things worked together against the peace of Europe; but the responsibility of thirteen years of war, ruinous for France and disastrous for all parties, does not rest on Louis XIV. alone.

Thirty years before, Austria and France, the two powers claiming the succession which would be left by the death of Charles II. without children, had agreed

between themselves as to the distribution of the heritage. In this treaty, Louis and his minister Lionne had consulted the true interests of France. They had secured great acquisitions of neighboring territory, which would have increased the strength and prosperity of that country.[1] They had left to the Emperor the barren honor of the Spanish throne; foreign dominions which would not render his power dangerous to Europe; possessions in Italy which, though eagerly coveted by Austria, would have been of small value to France.

Since 1668 the situation of Europe had so altered that it was impossible such an agreement should now be renewed. Some of the possessions, which by it were to be ceded to France, Louis had conquered without waiting for Charles to die. His increasing power and his restless ambition had excited such apprehension, that only by war could he now obtain the accessions of territory to which his chief rival had once freely consented. Since then, also, William of Orange had become king of England, and if he could not control, he largely influenced the foreign policy of that country and of Holland. Both of those nations were exceedingly jealous of any increase in the power of France; and they especially feared her acquisition of the Low Countries, the portion of the Spanish empire which the Emperor had been most willing to cede. By the statesmen of Holland and by William III., the preservation of a strong barrier in Flanders was deemed absolutely necessary for the liberty of the Seven Provinces. Perhaps they exaggerated its importance, but this belief controlled their policy.

The Emperor Leopold was also less inclined to

[1] See page 66, *supra*.

grant favorable terms to France, because he had now strong hopes of securing the whole succession for himself. In 1689, when the alliance against Louis was perfected, William and the States General had guaranteed to the Emperor the entire Spanish Succession, without even providing against the union of the crowns of Spain and the empire on the same head. If this agreement had been carried out, it would have reconstructed the empire of Charles V., and it can only be explained by the exaggerated fear that William entertained of the possible empire of Louis XIV. Ten years later, both William and the States General were convinced that their covenant was a foolish one, and they declined any longer to be bound by its terms. The Emperor denounced their bad faith, but his denunciation was unheeded.

There were now three claimants to the Spanish throne. Louis asserted the right of his son the dauphin, as heir of Maria Theresa, the oldest sister of Charles II. The title of the dauphin would have been unquestionably valid, if it had not been for the renunciation signed by his mother. To this plea Louis replied that the instrument was absolutely invalid, and that, even had it ever possessed any validity, its conditions had not been fulfilled by Spain. The infant son of the Elector of Bavaria, the grandson of a younger sister, might be regarded as next in the succession, if the dauphin was barred by the renunciation of his mother. His claims were supported by considerations of more weight than the interpretation to be given to covenants and protocols. He could acquire the entire Spanish empire, without thereby obtaining a power which would be dangerous to the tranquillity or to the independence of the rest of Europe. The

Emperor likewise traced his right to the succession through female descent. It was further removed than that of the others, but he had in his favor, as he believed, the fact that England and Holland feared him much less than they feared Louis, and that the present king of Spain and his wife were anxious that the inheritance should go to the house of Austria.

The question, however, was not one to be decided by construing renunciations, or by investigations into the rules of inheritance. It involved the present happiness and the future lot of countless millions. It affected not only the inhabitants of Castile and Aragon, but Italians who dwelt under the shadow of the Alps, and Italians who lived among the olives and the orange groves of Sicily and Naples; Dutchmen whom dikes protected from the waters of the North Sea; and black men, who, under a tropical sun, toiled at the culture of the tobacco plant and the sugar cane. It was idle to say that such an inheritance was to be disposed of as would be the title to a hundred acres of land; that it was governed by the rules of law which would be laid down by the vote of four judges to three in an action of ejectment or of trespass. There was no court competent to render a decision, no tribunal which had the power to enforce its decree. It was equally idle to say that any person had the absolute right to govern the scattered states of this great empire; or that Europe had no voice as to a succession which affected the interests, and perhaps the safety, of every European state. The Spaniards themselves could justly claim a voice in the choice of their own sovereign, but they were indifferent as to who he might be; their only desire was that Spain should continue to rule over the states that

were subject to her, for the greatest possible extension of the worst possible government. It was evident, therefore, that wisdom required an endeavor to adjust the succession in a manner which should satisfy the different claimants and preserve the peace of Europe, and it was equally evident that this could not be accomplished by allowing any one of the three to have it all. If this endeavor failed, every intelligent man knew that there was but one arbitration to whose decision claimants so powerful would submit, and that was the arbitration of the sword.

Soon after the peace of Ryswick, negotiations were commenced between France, England, and Holland for an amicable adjustment of the Spanish Succession by the only practicable means, an equitable partition. William was anxious for an agreement which should prevent a ruinous war, and which should also prevent, what he believed would be equally ruinous, a great increase in the power of France. Louis XIV. was not only willing, but desirous, for such an arrangement. Unquestionably he preferred that one of his descendants should wear the crown of Spain, with its empire undiminished. He can hardly be blamed for that. The man who is not willing to have his son made sole legatee of a wealthy uncle possesses qualities that are rare. Louis recognized, however, that this result could not be attained except at the end of a long and bloody war. His taste for fighting had diminished with years, and had been weakened by the discovery that its results were not so certain as he had believed in the victorious days of his youth. He was sincerely desirous of a permanent peace. He wrote to his ambassador in England that he was aware of the inclination of the Spanish to choose one of his grandsons for their

king. "The disposition of the Spanish," he added, "and my own forces, give me great hope for a favorable conclusion of a war, but one cannot tell the end. The misfortune and suffering which it brings are sure; and after I have sacrificed so much to give my subjects repose, no interest is more important than to preserve the tranquillity which they now enjoy." "I can enforce my grandson's rights," he says again, "but my desire for tranquillity leads me to make terms with William."[1] Louis might have obtained more favorable terms of partition, if he had seen fit to negotiate with the Emperor. The possessions of Spain most valuable to France were those which would strengthen her northern boundary, and carry her limits further towards the Rhine. Those the Emperor would be most willing to cede, and William and the States General would be most sure to refuse. But Louis believed that the Emperor neither desired a fair partition, nor had the power to enforce one if agreed upon. England and Holland, on the other hand, had shown the extent of their resources in the late war. They had contributed in men and money more than all the innumerable allies with whom they were associated. If he could agree with them upon a fairly satisfactory partition, the rest of Europe would be forced to submit.

The negotiations thus begun resulted, in September, 1698, in what is known as the first partition treaty. William preferred the infant son of the Elector of Bavaria as the future king of Spain. Louis was not unwilling to concede this, if fair compensation could be made for the abandonment of the rights of the dauphin. What the allies were willing to give

[1] Louis to Tallard, July 15 and August 5, 1698.

him, and what he at last agreed to accept, was certainly moderate indemnity.[1] If his conduct can be criticised, it is because he was content with accessions which would have weakened rather than strengthened France. Naples, Sicily, and some Italian towns on the Mediterranean were to be given the dauphin. The experience of the past had shown that these distant provinces were apt to be a curse rather than a blessing. The lives of countless men had been sacrificed in the endeavor to enforce the rights of French kings over Italian possessions. There was no reason to suppose that Naples would be any less perilous a heritage in the eighteenth than in the sixteenth century. Louis himself admitted that the best thing to do with Naples and Sicily might be to make of them a separate kingdom for one of his grandsons.[2] The small province of Guipuzcoa, adjoining France on the south, was added to her share. The Emperor had taken no part in the negotiations, but it was agreed that Milan should be given to his son, the archduke. The son of the Elector of Bavaria was to inherit Spain and all the rest of her foreign possessions; and if he died without children, his father was to succeed him on the Spanish throne.

The partition treaty excited universal indignation in Spain. This feeling was natural, but it was not entitled to consideration. That country had long shown its inability to regulate its affairs with any degree of wisdom; its rule rested like a deadly pall upon widespread possessions in the New World and the

[1] Lord Macaulay has described the negotiations as to the partition treaties with great fullness, and with his usual accuracy and lucidity.

[2] Louis to Tallard, April 19, 1698.

Old. It was impossible that this foreign empire should remain unimpaired, and the dismemberment would be as beneficial as it was inevitable. In order to defeat the partition if possible, Charles now made his will, by which he selected the elector's son as sole heir to the Spanish throne and all its possessions. The elector, however, was not tempted by this bait; he agreed with the allies that the title of his son should rest, not upon the will, but upon the treaty of partition, and that its provisions should be carried out.

Charles II. was fated to do to Spain and to Europe the greatest possible harm, whether he lived or whether he died. His life had been of no use to any one in the world, and to himself least of all, but his death at this time would have been of inestimable advantage. Though Louis had secured but moderate terms, he was prepared to enforce the partition as it had been agreed upon. The Emperor would have been discontented with his lot, but he was in no position to oppose the united decision of France, England, and Holland.

In the autumn of 1698, it seemed that Charles must soon die, but he continued to live. In February, 1699, the electoral prince, a child of five, was dead, and Charles II. was still dragging out a diseased and miserable existence. Thus the first partition came to naught by the act of God, and the second partition was to share a similar fate by the act of man. As soon as the death of the electoral prince was known, Louis intimated his willingness to make a new arrangement. The terms which he demanded were reasonable, and he showed true political wisdom in leaving to his rival the more splendid but the more useless part of the heritage. In addition to what France was given by

the first treaty, she was to have Lorraine; and the Duke of Lorraine, in exchange for this, was to receive the duchy of Milan. All the rest of the Spanish empire was allotted to the archduke, the second son of the Emperor. This partition was agreed upon between William and Louis within two or three months after the death of the electoral prince. They were men who knew their own minds, and were not afraid of reaching a conclusion. Owing to delays in Holland, the treaty was not finally ratified until the spring of 1700.[1]

To this treaty the Emperor and all the states of Europe were asked to accede. Many of the minor powers expressed their approval. The Duke of Lorraine agreed to accept Milan in exchange for his province. If the Emperor Leopold had been satisfied with the share of his son, the tranquillity of Europe would have been assured, and Louis would not at the last have accepted the perilous heritage of the Spanish monarchy for his grandson. As the archduke was to have by far the largest share, it would seem that Austria should have been content. He was allotted the kingdom of Spain and the West Indies; he was to be lord of Mexico and Peru and the Lowlands. France received much less than she was awarded by the partition to which the Emperor had agreed in 1668.

Notwithstanding this, Leopold would not accept the terms of the treaty. The principal reason for his conduct was a chronic inability to make up his mind. It was easier for him to make no decision, and to trust

[1] The treaty is found in *Corps Dip.*, t. vii. The negotiations can be followed in the correspondence between William and Heinsius, and between Louis and Tallard.

to fortune to provide some advantageous solution of the difficulty. The Emperor, also, had great hopes of obtaining all, and was unwilling to surrender anything. He knew that Charles would prefer that his successor should belong to the house of Austria, rather than to the house of Bourbon; if Charles made a will declaring the archduke his heir, Leopold did not believe that England and Holland would go to war to secure possessions for Louis XIV., whom they feared and hated. Besides all this, Austria looked with covetous eyes upon Milan and the other Italian possessions of Spain, and these were taken from her by the treaty of partition. The ministers of Leopold said that Louis ought to treat directly with the Emperor, instead of with the maritime powers; Austria and France were the only parties interested; they could determine upon a division, and if they were content, no one else could complain; England and Holland had no business to interfere; they would surely deceive Louis; they were greedy and untrustworthy heretics, who had broken the agreement they made with the Emperor in 1689, and would break their agreement with France with the same facility.[1] Louis put no confidence in the suggestions of the Austrian court; he had cast in his lot with England and Holland, and by the bargain made with them he intended to abide.

The Emperor was given three months in which to join in the treaty. The three months rolled by, and he announced formally that he would not accept its terms. As uncle and heir of the king of Spain, he said that he could not in courtesy discuss any parti-

[1] These arguments were reported to Louis by Villars, the French minister at Vienna, and can be found in his correspondence.

tion, while that monarch might still hope for a long life and a numerous posterity. Notwithstanding his attitude, it was still possible that war might be averted. A secret article gave Leopold two months after Charles's death during which he could accept the partition. If the three powers continued firm in their position, he might decide to take what he could get, instead of beginning a war in which he would surely be beaten.

Other events disappointed the expectations and changed the purposes of the parties most interested, and the Spanish crown was not again to be thrust upon the house of Austria. The Spaniards had been irritated by the first treaty of partition, and their wrath exceeded all bounds when they discovered that the same parties were engaged a second time in the dismemberment of their monarchy. Though a partition was necessary, no one likes to be told that he must be dissected, and that he is too feeble to prevent the operation. The queen broke the furniture in her anger at the intelligence, and Charles would perhaps have done the same if he had possessed sufficient vigor. As to the person of their future ruler, the Spanish were indifferent. There was no living Spaniard who knew what it was to have a good government, or to live under a wise king. No king could be worse than the one they had, and they did not care to find one who would be any better. The one thing desired by all, from the imbecile on the throne to the beggar in the street, was to preserve intact their foreign empire. It was that which united the Spain of Charles II. with the Spain of Charles V., and no true Spaniard would deign to consider the changes which made the continuance of that empire impossible. Statesmen might reflect on the condition of Eu-

rope and its political necessities; they might seek to avert long years of war of which no man could foresee the result. The Spaniard troubled himself with none of these things. It was from the vice-royalties of Mexico and Peru, of Naples and Sicily, that the noble expected to repair by plunder the diminution of his estates caused by display. The beggar wore his rags with a more heroic air because he felt that he was one of a nation which ruled great monarchies and distant peoples. Their foreign dependencies gratified the two strongest qualities of the Spanish, their indolence and their pride; from them they obtained money which they had not earned, and a deference to which they were no longer entitled.

Though Louis XIV. had suggested the treaties of partition and had pressed them to a conclusion, the Spanish vented their indignation on England and Holland. Louis had rights which he must be expected to protect, but these remote heretics had no business to interfere in the affairs of a Catholic state. Notwithstanding the great achievements of William III., he was regarded with a certain contempt because, instead of being an absolute monarch, he was fettered and checked by a Parliament. Though Charles II. of Spain could with difficulty walk, or talk, or think, he could ruin his kingdom without interference from his subjects, and the position of the English king seemed contemptible in comparison. William, moreover, had taken up arms in defense of an heretical creed, and had overthrown a lawful sovereign. Even the Venetian ambassador wrote of the English that their violation of divine justice would bring terrible disasters upon that wicked nation.[1] If this was the belief of a Vene-

[1] *Rel. Ven.*, 1699.

tian, how much stronger would be the confidence of a Spaniard in such a result!

The conduct of the Austrian government during these years of intrigue was characterized neither by magnanimity nor by wisdom. Leopold was quite as greedy as Louis showed himself at the end, and more so than he was at the beginning. He was resolved to obtain the entire heritage for the house of Hapsburg. He refused to accede to the treaties of partition, by which he might have preserved the peace of Europe, and secured advantages vastly greater than were obtained at the end of thirteen years of war. While Louis offered liberal concessions to obtain peace, the Emperor would make none, and he deserved little sympathy when he was at last outwitted in his own game. Leopold desired that one of his sons should be selected by Charles as heir of the Spanish throne. Had his diplomacy been characterized by the sagacity of that of his rival, he could easily have accomplished this result. During the late war, it would have been possible to send the archduke to Spain, to establish there an Austrian army, to have had the Austrian succession publicly declared. The critical time was allowed to pass; and after peace had been made, the Austrians constantly injured their chances. Charles wanted the loan of some troops, and the Emperor refused to furnish them, except at the expense of the Spanish, who had no money with which to pay their own soldiers. The ambassadors of Austria also made themselves unpopular. The populace complained that they were alike proud and mean; they were as overbearing as an hidalgo, and as niggardly as a miser. The queen was the chief representative of the Austrian party, and she was perhaps more hated than any other person in the kingdom.

The French had long been disliked by the Spanish. Louis had frequently brought war against them; he had taken from them many of their possessions, he had humiliated their pride; it was strongly suspected that as soon as Charles died he would endeavor to annex the Spanish empire to the French crown. But in the years following the peace of Ryswick, this condition of public feeling changed. The magnanimity with which Louis surrendered to Spain all that he had taken from her during twenty years atoned for his ancient misdeeds. His persecution of the Huguenots excited the admiration of that country.[1] He stood before the world as the great representative of Catholicism. A descendant of Louis XIV. was felt to be the only fit sovereign for a nation to which the Inquisition and *autos da fé* were dear. While the Emperor was haggling about his troops, Louis offered to furnish ships to assist Spain in her war with Morocco.[2] The Spanish were convinced that only by placing themselves under the protection of so powerful a monarch could they prevent the dismemberment of their empire. These favorable impressions were increased by the judicious conduct of the French ambassador at Madrid. The Marquis of Harcourt was as politic and as liberal as the Count of Harrach was injudicious and parsimonious. In a land where display was important, he dazzled the multitude by the state which he maintained. When he made his formal entry, the streets were deserted except where the procession passed; the balconies were filled with ladies; the country people came in, as they would to see a bull-fight; the king delayed his dinner for three quarters

[1] *Mém. de la Torre*, i. 136.

[2] Louis to Harcourt, May 6, 1698.

of an hour, a thing which had never before happened.[1] Fountains of wine and chocolate played in front of the minister's palace, at which all could quench their thirst. The palace itself was thrown open. It was gorgeously furnished, but the attention of the multitude was especially attracted by portraits of the grandsons of Louis XIV., to whose countenances the artist had imparted all that was possible of majesty and benignity. When the marquis made his visits of ceremony, five carriages accompanied him, and thirty valets and six pages, "all as gorgeously dressed as a priest celebrating the mass."[2] The manner in which the ambassador's money was paid to tradesmen, given to beggars, and lent to nobles, suggested the reign of plenty that could be expected from the advent of a French sovereign.

From the day he accepted the Spanish throne for his grandson until now, it has been claimed that Louis was acting in bad faith during all the negotiations in reference to a partition; that while with the one hand he was signing treaties with William which he never intended to observe, with the other he was endeavoring to obtain from Charles the entire succession. It is now possible to know the truth of this matter. We can read all the correspondence between Louis and Tallard his minister at London, Villars his minister at Vienna, and Harcourt his minister at Madrid. His real desires were certainly disclosed in the secret instructions which he gave his representatives. It is impossible for any one to study this correspondence without being convinced that Louis acted in perfect

[1] Harcourt to Louis, September 17, 1698.

[2] Père de la Blaudinière to Général de la Merci, September 20, 1698.

good faith during all these protracted negotiations until the very end. Then a sudden temptation was presented to him, and he disregarded alike the counsels of wisdom and the counsels of honesty. His responsibility for the grievous results that ensued is none the less, but he was not as entirely faithless a politician as has been claimed. Indeed, if we look for the honorable observance of treaties, we shall not find it at this era. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was seldom that any sovereign or statesman felt bound to respect a treaty longer than suited his interests. European states broke their agreements, when they had the inclination and the power, with no more hesitation than do the present rulers of Dahomey and Uganda. Louis XIV. violated the treaty of partition with some slight pretense of justification. With the exception of England, every nation which had guaranteed the succession of Maria Theresa of Austria broke its faith, without any pretense of justification. "One should not violate his word without some excuse," said Frederick the Great, "or he will gain the reputation of a trifler." By this simple rule he governed his own conduct during half a century.

When Harcourt was sent to Spain, no treaty of partition had been made. His instructions bade him use every effort to form a party in the French interest, and to secure the Spanish throne for a Bourbon prince.[1] The Austrian ambassador was engaged in similar endeavors in behalf of the archduke, and there was no reason why Louis should not do the same. During a large part of the three years that followed, no treaty of partition was in force, and every endeavor

[1] *Mém. pour servir au sieur Marquis d'Harcourt.*

of a skillful diplomacy was used to favor the interests of one of Louis's grandchildren. But so soon as the king had bound himself, his instructions to his ministers show that he expected to carry out his agreements. When the first partition was decided upon, he wrote to Harcourt: "I have balanced the arguments, whether to profit by the present inclination of the Spanish, or to be content with advantages less apparent but more solid in reality, and by that means assure the peace of Europe. This has led me to treat with England." He instructed his representative to do what he could to reconcile the Spaniards to a dismemberment that was inevitable, and to insinuate that the electoral prince would be the most judicious choice for their future king.[1] "Under these circumstances," he writes again, "it is not fitting to say anything to the king of Spain in reference to the succession."[2] In like manner, when the second partition had been agreed upon, he wrote that this put an end to negotiations at Madrid, and there was no reason for Harcourt's further stay.[3]

It is undoubtedly the fact that Louis had little hope of Charles selecting a Bourbon prince. He knew that the Spanish people were now favorable to France, but the Austrian sympathies of the king were supposed to be insurmountable. Harcourt declared that a will disposing of the succession could have no validity unless it were ratified by the Cortes, and he took this position because he supposed that any will would surely be in favor of the archduke. He repeatedly asked

[1] Louis to Harcourt, September 15, 1698.

[2] Louis to Harcourt, September 25.

[3] Louis to Harcourt, March 11 and 20, 1700. "Il n'est plus question par conséquent de négocier à Madrid," etc.

Charles not to execute such an instrument.[1] Even the favorable disposition of the Spanish people Louis expected to forfeit, when it was announced that he had joined in a treaty for the partition of the Spanish empire. His ambassador wrote him that the party which favored France would cease to exist when the terms of the treaty of partition were known.[2] In the spring of 1700, the second partition treaty was ratified; in May, the Marquis of Harcourt left Madrid, and France was only represented by an envoy. At that time neither Louis nor his ambassador had the least expectation that a Bourbon prince would be designated by Charles as the future king of Spain. From the time that this treaty was signed, there cannot be found in the instructions sent to the representatives of France at Madrid a word, which even intimates a desire that they should obtain from Charles a will in favor of a French prince. On the other hand, Louis constantly expressed his hope that Charles would die intestate; in that case he believed that the Emperor would be forced to accede to the treaty of partition, and France might obtain the portion allotted to her without having to go war for it.

The instructions sent Tallard show still more strongly Louis's eagerness to agree with England and Holland on a partition of the Spanish empire. Such a league, he declared, would be so strong that no one could oppose it.[3] "Say that it is my intention to accomplish punctually the conditions of the treaty, and that

[1] Harcourt to Louis, April 30, 1698, *et pas.*

[2] Harcourt to Louis, June 30, 1699. "Le parti de votre Majesté tombera de lui-même, des qu'on sera informé de la division de la monarchie." — Louis to Blécourt, July 15, 1700.

[3] Louis to Tallard, September 11, 1699.

they need have no fear of offers that may be made elsewhere," he wrote again. "My only engagements are with William and the States General, and I intend to accomplish punctually what I have promised."[1] In his zeal in William's behalf, he instructed Tallard to insinuate that the French king would willingly furnish him aid in his contests with the Parliament.[2] Louis knew well that he was not dealing with a Charles II., and he bade his minister to use infinite precaution in suggesting such assistance. Not only were these fair professions made, but, after the second treaty was signed, the Austrian ambassador was informed that the archduke might at once enter Spain as its future sovereign if the Emperor would accede to the partition.[3] Had this offer been accepted by Leopold, it would have ended all scheming for a Bourbon prince, and the war of the Spanish Succession would have been prevented. Two months after Harcourt had left Madrid, Louis sent to William the copy of a letter stating that the Spanish Council wished to call his grandson to the throne, and he added: "Neither the offers of the Emperor, nor other offers still more advantageous, will ever lead me to violate the engagements I have taken."[4] In the autumn it was certain that Charles could live but a few weeks. Louis wrote Tallard to insist that England and Holland should be in readiness with ships and troops to assist in the execution of the partition, and his letters show a nervous apprehension lest they should be remiss in this respect. On the 19th of October, almost three

[1] Louis to Tallard, June 3, 1700.
[2] Louis to Tallard, September 17, 1699, March 26, 1700.
[3] Manchester to Jersey, May 19, 1700.
[4] Louis to Tallard, June 26, 1700.

weeks after the will in favor of the Duke of Anjou had been signed, Louis sent a secret dispatch to Tallard, insisting that the allies should at once furnish troops for the enforcement of the treaty, and he wrote his ambassador: "I cannot believe that they will fail in performing agreements so formal and so precise, when the time shall arrive to execute them."[1] This was only twelve days before Charles's death. Certainly, if Louis had then contemplated any violation of the partition treaty, his ambassador would not have been insisting that England and Holland should forthwith equip ships and soldiers, which could only be used against himself. Those who believe that his protestations were in bad faith must admit that he was not such a fool as to hasten the military preparations of nations whom he would soon have for enemies. It is manifest that when this letter was written, Louis fully expected to carry out the partition, and was anxious for William's aid in case he met with resistance in taking possession of Milan and the Sicilies.

In the mean time events had occurred which changed Louis's purposes and the future of European history. The Spanish were unable to avert the dismemberment which was so offensive to their pride, but they had the satisfaction of imposing on Europe all the ills which statesmen had sought to avoid. The chief place in the counsels of Charles II. was now held by Cardinal Porto Carrero, and he at last decided to exert his influence in favor of the French party. He was doubtless controlled by the belief that thus he would be able to gratify his own ambition, but his conduct was in accordance with the desires of the people whose minister he was. They wished to resort to any

[1] Louis to Tallard, October 19, 1700.

measures to preserve their empire intact; they believed that a French prince under the protection of Louis XIV. alone would have the power to accomplish this result, and they were indifferent as to the wars that might desolate France and Spain in the endeavor.

The king of Spain had no legal right to decide who should inherit his domains. There was, however, a strong probability that if he named a successor, the prince thus chosen would be recognized by almost the entire nation as their lawful sovereign. The Spanish revered royalty as they reverenced religion. They obeyed implicitly a living king, and they would not be apt to disregard his desires, even when he was dead. It was, however, a delicate and a difficult operation to obtain from the sovereign, whose life of misery was fast approaching its end, a declaration in favor of any successor, and most difficult to obtain a declaration in favor of a French successor. Among all the millions whom he ruled, it is doubtful if there was a man so unfitted to decide this great question as the person whom the fortune of birth had placed on the Spanish throne. What little intelligence he had ever possessed had been destroyed by the life he had led, and the diseases by which he had been afflicted. As the hour of death drew near, the only feeling that possessed his superstitious and enfeebled mind was an awful dread of the horrors that might be awaiting him on the other side of the grave. It needed but the suggestion of a wily adviser, and his diseased mind saw visions of centuries of burning as the punishment for some proposed measure. He told the Austrian ambassador that he must soon die, and unless he forthwith sent out of Madrid an Austrian regiment of the Guards, he would probably be thrown into hell and

burned for all eternity.[1] He thought only of religion, and all there was to his religion was the fear of hell.

Charles's sympathies, so far as he was capable of having any, were strongly in favor of the house of Austria. To that family he himself belonged. Leopold had always been his friend; Louis had always been his enemy. His wife, whom he feared, bade him select the archduke as his heir. A will in favor of a Bourbon prince could only be obtained by frightening Charles into making it. Those who surrounded him were, however, indifferent as to the means they used to accomplish the result. Charles was afraid of his ministers, and still more afraid of his wife; but he feared the devil most of all. Porto Carrero and the confessor seized the opportunity when the queen was out of the palace, shut the king up in a chamber and double-locked the door, so that she could not return and interfere with their arguments. They were unable to be rid of her entirely, but Charles was assured that demons entered the room whenever the queen came in, and the unhappy king lived in terror of her appearance. He was in constant fear of evil spirits, and his attendants played upon his superstitions to advance their ends. Spirits were consulted as to the course he should pursue. There were French devils and Austrian devils, and the difference in their counsels was attributed to the father of lies, from whom they all sprung. All the devils who were interviewed agreed that Charles was bewitched. One recommended the use of consecrated vinegar, and another advocated more vigorous remedies. A devil in the shape of a woman penetrated into Charles's chamber, but was frightened off by the sight of a piece of the true

[1] *Mém. de Harrach*, ii. 38.

cross. With all this impious mummery, the condition of the dying idiot became even more pitiable than usual.

In the summer of 1700, the Spanish council resolved that the interests of the kingdom would be best subserved by naming one of Louis's grandsons as Charles's successor. Charles had still enough intelligence left to attach little importance to the advice of his council, and he hesitated about following it. In this crisis, Porto Carrero advised him to consult the Holy Father, and Charles eagerly sought this aid for a timid conscience. Innocent XII. was Pope, — a weak though a conscientious man, and well known to be entirely in the interests of France. Innocent submitted the question to three cardinals whose sympathies were equally pronounced. They decided that the purpose of the renunciation exacted from Maria Theresa was to prevent the union of the French and Spanish crowns, and as that object could be accomplished by the choice of a younger son of the dauphin, that family ought not to be deprived of the rights to which their birth entitled them. The Pope thereupon sent a letter to Charles, advising him to act upon the resolution of his council. Still the king hesitated. His health was again much worse, and Porto Carrero felt that there was little time left. Fortified by the letter of the Pope, he told Charles that there could be no hope of safety for his soul unless he preferred the welfare of his people to any inclination for his kindred.[1] "I

[1] The highly colored letter from the Pope, of which St. Simon pretends to give the substance, and which has been quoted from him by most historians, has no existence. The utterances of Innocent were temperate and dignified. The spiritual thumbscrews, if I may use that expression, were not applied by Inno-

must prepare myself to appear before a judge who is no respecter of persons," said the unhappy king, and he told the cardinal that upon him should be thrown the responsibility of this great decision. The minister wept at this mark of confidence, but he did not allow his tears to delay the preparation of the instrument. On October 2, 1700, Charles signed the testament by which he assumed to dispose of the fate of provinces and countries, of the names and existence of many of which he was probably ignorant. "God alone gives away kingdoms, for to Him they belong. I am no longer anything," said the miserable man, as he set his hand to the document.

The will is interesting as a picture of the intellectual condition of the Spanish monarch, as well as for the disposition made of the vast heritage. He bade his successor to be constant to the faith, to honor the Inquisition, to prefer always the interests of religion to those of the state, and to do all in his power to obtain the adoption of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. He then directed that one hundred thousand masses should be said for his own soul. Should these prove more than were required to release it from purgatory, the residue were to be applied for the benefit of the souls of his ancestors who were suffering there; and if any masses still remained unused, they should apply to the advantage of those souls in purgatory who were in for the longest term. In addition to this, he recommended his spiritual welfare to the

cent, but by Porto Carrero. The criticisms on the authenticity of Innocent's letter by recent German writers throw no doubt upon the fact that a committee of cardinals expressed themselves in favor of the French claim; that their views were adopted by the Pope, and his opinion in some form was transmitted to Charles.

special charge of a great number of saints, and then proceeded to dispose of his earthly kingdoms. The Duke of Anjou, second son of the dauphin of France, was named as the heir to the entire Spanish Succession. Should he refuse to accept it, his younger brother was next named, and after him the Archduke of Austria, on condition, however, that the throne of Spain should never be occupied by any one who was either emperor, or king of France. Charles then directed that the states composing the Spanish empire should forever remain united, and asked that the burdens imposed upon the people might be lightened, and that his successors would govern with wisdom. These requests unhappily were not destined to be answered.[1]

It has been usually supposed that the will was kept secret until Charles's death, and that Louis's decision to accept its provisions was reached after the conferences which he then held with his ministers and Mme. de Maintenon. This is not the fact, and those solemn consultations were probably much less momentous than they seemed. In the summer of 1700, Porto Carrero had endeavored to obtain from Louis some assurance that if his grandson were declared heir to the Spanish throne he would be allowed to accept the inheritance. To this Louis replied that it would be time enough to decide the question when the Spanish king made a will to that effect.[2] He could not well answer otherwise. If he absolutely refused to accept, Charles would probably be made to sign a will in favor of the archduke, and the Emperor would certainly decline to surrender anything unless compelled by force of arms. Louis continued his preparations to carry out the par-

[1] The will is published in *Corps Dip.*, t. viii.

[2] Louis to Blécourt, August 23, 1700.

tition, and told his representative to make no endeavors to obtain a will in favor of his grandson.[1] Notwithstanding this, the will was signed. The French envoy was soon informed of its purport, and he at once reported to his master that the Duke of Anjou had been chosen heir to the entire Spanish monarchy.[2] Charles was not dead when this great intelligence reached Versailles. He might annul the will as he had annulled prior ones, but the question of its acceptance was at once considered.

Louis was dazzled by the sudden vision of glory that was revealed. All his life he had been scheming and fighting to obtain some portion of the Spanish Succession, and now the whole was freely offered. His grandson might be king of Castile, Aragon, and the two Sicilies, lord of Peru, Mexico, and the West Indies, Archduke of Milan and Count of Flanders. The great thrones of the world would be filled by Louis's posterity. Spanish grandees would bow before his descendants at Madrid, as would French dukes at Versailles. His offspring, united in action, ruling powerful kingdoms in Europe and America, would dictate the policy of the world; their power and glory would perpetuate the fame of their great ancestor. These visions, however alluring, did not at once overthrow the dictates of good faith and good judgment. The king conferred with Tallard his minister in the negotiations for the partition, Torcy his secretary for foreign affairs, and Mme. de Maintenon. Both Torcy and Tallard agreed that the acceptance of the will would surely involve France in a war, the results of which could

[1] Louis to Blécourt, August 30, 1700. "Vous ne devez faire aucune démarche pour l'obtenir, la sincerité du roi d'Angleterre et des Etats Généraux paraissant dans toute leur conduite."

[2] Blécourt to Louis, October 7, 1700.

not be foreseen. Louis was so far affected by their views that he said he would send a courier to Holland and announce his adherence to the treaty of partition.[1] But several days passed before Charles's death was known, and before a final and irrevocable decision could be given. The correspondence of Louis shows plainly enough that he was aware that for France the advantages of the partition were greater than any which she could derive from a Bourbon prince filling the Spanish throne.[2] To accept the will was in all probability to involve the country in a great and an uncertain war, not for her own protection or aggrandizement, but in behalf of his dynasty; not that France might be greater, but that the family of Louis XIV. might be more illustrious. Such arguments had no weight with the most of those by whom he was surrounded. Almost without exception, his family and his courtiers were in favor of accepting the will of Charles II., and doubtless their views had a large influence on the final decision. They declared that France and Spain united could look with indifference on the hostility of the rest of Europe, and that to

[1] *Mém. de Tallard*, November, 1700.

[2] There are numerous instances of this in his correspondence with Philip. The correspondence with Harcourt, the French ambassador at Madrid, shows the evil and mistaken advice which Louis constantly received. Harcourt was one of the ablest of the great nobles of France. When we see the folly of his counsels, we feel that it was of great advantage to the development of that kingdom during the seventeenth century that a nobility bereft of political wisdom was, to a large extent, excluded from any voice in the state. We have many contemporary French memoirs at this period. From the Marquis of Dangeau, who only professed to be a courtier, to the Duke of St. Simon, who thought that he was a statesman, all are characterized by the lack of any political capacity and of any intelligent appreciation of public questions.

have a Bourbon on the Spanish throne was more glorious than any acquisitions of territory. On this occasion, as on many others, Louis allowed his own better judgment to be controlled by those who were not blessed with political wisdom.

On November 9, the news of Charles's death reached Versailles, and on the 11th, the Spanish crown was formally tendered to the Duke of Anjou. The position certainly was not free from embarrassment. No one seems to have attached much importance to the fact that the king had solemnly agreed to a different disposition. Louis felt that the offer of the throne had come without solicitation or interference on his part, and therefore he was at liberty to accept it. Had the Emperor joined in the treaty of partition it would have been carried out, for Louis was sincere in wishing for peace. But the advocates of the Duke of Anjou now loudly said that war was certain in any event; if Louis refused to accept the throne for his grandson, the archduke by the terms of the will would become king of Spain, with her people resolved to support the integrity of the monarchy; it was not likely that England and Holland would go to war against the Emperor, who had always been their friend, to help conquer provinces for Louis XIV., who had always been their enemy. France would be left to contend alone for the rights secured to her by the treaty of partition. As long as it was necessary to fight, it was better to fight for the whole than to fight for a part. The king decided in favor of the policy which accorded with his desires, and which he easily brought himself to believe accorded with his judgment.[1]

[1] The authorities as to the partition treaties, the intrigues in Spain, the will of Charles II., and the subsequent conduct of

On the 16th of November, the Spanish ambassador attended the levée of the king, and was told that he might salute the Duke of Anjou as his sovereign. Immediately afterward the great doors were thrown open, and as the crowd of officials and courtiers poured in, Louis said to them: "Gentlemen, behold the king of Spain. His birth entitles him to the throne, the nation desires him, and I have acceded to their request. It is the will of Heaven." It was announced that on December 1st Philip would depart for his new kingdom. "The journey will now be an easy one," said the Spanish minister, "for the Pyrenees no longer exist."[1] The young sovereign at once received the honors to which his rank entitled him. He stood at Louis's right hand; his grandfather treated him with the same exact punctilio that he would have shown to any foreign sovereign. The few days in which he could entertain his own grandson as king of Spain — the possessor of the vast heritage which for almost half a century he had coveted for his posterity — were doubtless the proudest of Louis's long reign. He wept for joy. To the ambassador he said, with

Louis, are to be found in the correspondence between him and Tallard, Villars, Harcourt, and Blécourt; also in the *Mémoires de Torcy* and the correspondence between William III. and Portland, Heinsius, and the English minister at Paris.

[1] *Mém. de Dangeau*, vii. 419. The famous remark, "the Pyrenees no longer exist," was first attributed to Louis XIV. by Voltaire. It is not the only instance where the great writer has given the great monarch credit for sayings and actions which were not his. The proceedings when the Duke of Anjou was declared king of Spain, and the remarks of the Spanish ambassador, are given by Dangeau, who was an eyewitness, with admirable accuracy and tiresome minuteness. The remark of the ambassador about the Pyrenees is also reported in the *Mercure*, the official journal.

an effusion such as his majestic dignity rarely allowed him to exhibit, "I still feel that this is all a dream."[1]

The intelligence that Charles had chosen the Duke of Anjou for his successor, and that Louis had accepted the heritage, was received with profound emotion by the nations of Europe. All the plans which had been laid to prevent the union of two great monarchies in the house of Bourbon were brought to naught. At Vienna, where the Emperor had been living in a fool's paradise, and had lost the chance of getting much in the hope of getting all, the irritation was extreme.[2] Leopold at once decided upon war, and his troops entered Italy in 1701. William III. was equally alarmed at seeing a Bourbon prince peacefully established at Madrid. His apprehensions as to the evils which would result to Europe were undoubtedly exaggerated. If the will of Charles was carried into effect, he declared that England and Holland would be in the utmost danger of total ruin.[3] The result showed how imaginary was this peril. France was indeed weakened and Spain dismembered by the war which ensued, but even if Philip had been left to enjoy in peace the entire Spanish inheritance, neither the liberties nor the prosperity of England and the United Provinces would have been endangered. William's mistake was that of his contemporaries, when they believed that if the sovereigns of France and Spain were united in blood they would necessarily be

[1] Dangeau, vii. 421 ; Sourches, vi. 308.

[2] The Austrian ambassador wrote Leopold after Charles had executed his last will, advised him of the fact, and was confident that an Austrian prince had been chosen as successor to the throne. The representatives of the Emperor were generally as ill-informed as those of Louis were well-informed.

[3] William to Heinsius, November 16, 1700.

united in policy. The history of those countries shows how unimportant are the ties of kith and kin. Louis XIII. of France was the brother-in-law of Philip IV. of Spain, and he was always fighting with him. Anne of Austria was Philip's sister, and she carried on war against him for sixteen years. Louis XIV. was brother-in-law of Charles II., and his chief occupation was depriving his relation of his possessions. Louis XV. was the nephew of Philip V., and, four years after the peace of Utrecht, France was engaged in war with Spain. The relationship between the kings of Spain and France in the eighteenth century was no closer than it had been in the seventeenth, and it had as little influence upon their policy.

With better ground, William felt indignant at Louis's bad faith, and was apprehensive of the purposes of a monarch who violated his agreements with unconcern. "We are dupes," he wrote bitterly; "but if one's word and faith are not to be kept, it is easy to cheat any man."

In England, however, the partition treaty had been unpopular, and Louis's violation of it excited little indignation. It was generally believed that a Bourbon prince ruling in Spain would be less injurious to English interests than a French king ruling in Sicily and Naples. Without England, Holland would take no action, and the Emperor alone could do nothing. If Louis had proceeded with wisdom and moderation, it is probable that he would have preserved the Spanish monarchy for his grandson intact; and it is certain that by reasonable concessions he could have saved France from a disastrous war, and his own fame from the defeats and misfortunes of his later years.

Moderation in the hour of prosperity was a quality

which he manifested as little as did his adversaries. An edict was registered declaring that Philip and his descendants should forfeit none of their rights as heirs to the French throne, and thus the probability of the union of the two countries under one king was ostentatiously proclaimed. This had been forbidden by the will, by virtue of which the Duke of Anjou became king of Spain, but Louis saw fit to accept the inheritance and disregard the limitation. The fortresses of the Spanish Lowlands had been garrisoned by Dutch troops. They were promptly expelled, and their place was taken by French soldiers. Such a change did no one any harm, but the English and Dutch saw in it the first step towards the annexation of Flanders by France. Louis told them that he harbored no such purpose, and that they could ask no better security than his royal word. Unfortunately his promise was no longer received as current coin. It is unlikely that the king would have appropriated any of his grandson's possessions, but he had broken faith so often that no one would believe him when he told the truth. Kings who do not keep their word, like debtors who do not meet their obligations, are embarrassed at last by the fact that they can get no further credit.

The Dutch proposed terms of settlement. They were probably more than they had a right to ask at the beginning of the war, though they were less than they obtained at the end. Louis would concede nothing. Doubtless the Spanish had chosen Philip as their king in the hope of thus preserving all their possessions, but that was no justification for Louis's position. It was France that must bear the burden of a war undertaken in order to gratify the stolid pride of

Spain. Louis declared that to surrender any of the rights of his grandson would be an act unbecoming his dignity, but surely his dignity did not require that he should wait until his armies were routed, his people were bankrupt, and his capital was in danger, before he made concessions.

On September 7, 1701, William, the Emperor, and the States General formed an alliance by which they agreed to secure for Austria the Italian possessions of Spain, to obtain a barrier for the Dutch in the Spanish Low Countries, and commercial advantages for England and Holland. To a very large extent, the treaty of Utrecht procured for the allies the objects which they originally had in view. It was not certain, however, that this alliance would take vigorous measures to secure its ends. The English were not as eager for war as their king, and without the hearty assistance of England the Emperor would have coveted Milan in vain, and the Dutch have sighed for a barrier to no purpose. A few days later James II. died, and when his son was recognized by Louis as the king of England, the English nation was at last ready to embark with enthusiasm on ten years of war against France.

It is difficult to speak with patience of this act of folly on Louis's part. The crimes of ambition, the mistakes of policy, have at least a motive, even if it is not a sufficient one. To violate the terms of a treaty, to affront another nation at a most critical period, to risk the results of forty years of diplomacy, in order to indulge in a display of empty politeness, and to excite the applause of the courtiers of Versailles, seems like suicidal folly. It may have been good manners, but it was very bad statesmanship.

Surely France would have fared better if her sovereign had been endowed with the churlish incivility of William III., instead of the magnificent courtesy of Louis XIV. It may be said in Louis's behalf that Mme. de Maintenon, the Duke of Burgundy, and all save a few of the king's advisers insisted that the only course fitting a great and a pious monarch was to recognize the Pretender. When the English remonstrated against having a Catholic sovereign selected for them by a French king, their addresses were declared by his courtiers to be exceedingly insolent.[1]

The languid contest of 1701 became by the next year a great war, in which Portugal, Savoy, and the most of Germany joined the allies. Very nearly the same alliance had been formed in 1689, and Spain had also been a member of it. It had then contended with difficulty against France alone, but such was not the case now. France was better off with the Spanish for enemies than as allies. She had not only to protect her own boundaries, but to send armies to Italy and to Spain, in the endeavor to preserve the extended and the helpless possessions of Philip V.

During the three years which followed the first invasion of Italy by Austria, the results of the war were evenly balanced. France held her own, and her armies threatened the Emperor in Vienna. The battle of Blenheim in 1704 turned the tide, which from that fatal day ran steadily against Louis XIV.

For a century the French had been so accustomed to success that the report of a defeat, where a French marshal in command had been captured and 11,000 of his men had laid down their arms on the field, was not credited.[2] From the day when Francis I. was

[1] *Mém. de Sourches*, vii. 141.

[2] *Lettres inédites de la Princesse Palatine*, August 21, 1704.

made prisoner on the field at Pavia, almost two centuries before, the armies of France had met with no such disaster. When the news was confirmed, the consternation at Paris and Versailles was universal. One man alone gave no outward mark of concern, and he was the king. During the eight years of defeat and disaster which ensued, Louis's face and manner were always characterized by the same calm dignity, the same perfect equanimity, as in his most prosperous days. Mme. de Maintenon alone saw the marks of distress which he concealed from the world. It was not that the king was insensible to these disasters. He was a proud man, and his pride was cut to the quick as his early conquests were taken from him, and he was forced to humble himself in the dust before enemies whom he had despised. But he possessed the fortitude which can bear mental distress and give no outward sign.[1]

The progress of the allied armies, though often checked by discord and injudicious counsels, was steady. In 1706, the battle of Ramillies was followed by the capture of most of the Spanish Flanders. Prince Eugene drove the French out of Italy, and the southern provinces of France became the field of battle. In the north, the successes of Marlborough forced the armies of Louis within the boundaries of France. Alsace, French Flanders, and Artois were invaded by the enemy. The defeat of Oudenarde in 1708 was followed by the defeat of Malplaquet in

[1] Frequent references to Louis's external calmness, and the pain which he suffered from these disasters, can be found in the correspondence of Mme. de Maintenon. The unbroken tranquillity of his manner during all these years is referred to constantly by all who had occasion to see him.

1709, and early in the next year the archduke for the second time took possession of Madrid. Lille, Ghent, Mons, Bouchain, and most of the important frontier towns were taken by the allies, and Marlborough and Eugene could regard the capture of Paris as by no means impossible.

Many reasons can be given for this series of disasters, which has no parallel in French history, from the time that Orleans was saved by Joan of Arc until the time that Paris was lost by Napoleon. The chief cause was the exhausted condition of France. For years that country had been growing poorer, and her financial ruin was completed by the war. Her exports had long been diminishing. The burden of taxation, aggravated by artificial restraints on trade, had brought internal commerce almost to a standstill. It was possible to obtain men enough for the armies which Louis maintained on the Rhine and the Po, in Flanders, Spain, and Savoy; but to give them regular pay, and sufficient food and clothing, would have been beyond the power even of Colbert and Louvois. No such ministers, moreover, were now found among the advisers of the king. The intellectual sterility which characterized the close of his reign manifested itself in the council chamber, as well as in the study and on the field. Louis disliked to see new faces about him, and still more did he dislike any suggestion of new measures. The secretaryships of war and finance, either of which required the entire time of a man of genius, were united in Chamillart, who had attracted the king's favor by his amiable qualities, and who, it was vainly hoped, would imbibe omniscience from the atmosphere of Versailles. He did all that was in the power of a well-meaning, obstinate, and stupid man

to bring disaster upon his country. The most erroneous of ancient financial devices were employed. The taxes that could be collected were not sufficient to pay over one third of the current expenses. In 1709, a winter of uncommon severity and a failure of the crops increased the general misery. There was no money; the shops were empty; the cold was more rigorous than had been experienced within the memory of man.[1] Cries of distress were raised against the king, whose omnipotence had so long been unquestioned. Not only in the provinces, but at Versailles, complaints against the government were uttered without restraint; they reached the ear of the king, and he felt bound to respect them. Chamillart was dismissed, — the only one of his ministers whom Louis ever sacrificed to public clamor. Enormous as the expenses of the court had long been, no one had presumed to criticise them, but in the hour of disaster the reverence for any institution abates. There were many now who dared to say that, when soldiers could have no shoes, the splendors of Versailles were in bad taste. Nothing was so painful to Louis as economy. When his fortunes looked the darkest, he told one of his marshals that he would perish with his army rather than fly from his capital. To die heroically would have been easier for him than to retrench the magnificence which had become part of his existence. To wait death like a Roman senator was one thing, but to scrimp like a Parisian shopkeeper was another. Still he did what he could. The new buildings, which had been his chief delight, were carried no further; the hospitalities of Marly were curtailed.[2]

[1] *Journal de Torcy*, December, 1709.

[2] The letters of Mme. de Maintenon in 1709 describe graphically the gloom and despondency of the king and the court.

Though desertion and disease thinned their ranks, the French soldiers fought with the gallantry which has always been their characteristic. They had, however, neither Louvois to supply them, nor Turenne nor Luxembourg to command them. Louis and Mme. de Maintenon were partial to those who understood the art of pleasing better than the art of fighting. Villeroy was given important commands, until his incompetency lost the battle of Ramillies and the most of Flanders. The endeavor to direct the movements of the armies from Versailles led to fatal delays, to hesitation on the part of generals, to mistakes in the orders when they at last arrived. Notwithstanding the enfeebled condition of the French soldiers, they were so nearly equal to their enemies that, had Marlborough led them at Blenheim, Ramillies, and Oudenarde, and the allies been under the command of Tallard, Villeroy, and the Duke of Burgundy, the result of each of those great battles would probably have been different.

The constant defeats of the war, the increasing distress both in Paris and the provinces, showed that France was being ruined in the endeavor to keep Philip on the throne of Spain. It was a bitter thing for Louis to abandon the cherished ambition of his life, but he felt that he must not endanger his kingdom in the interests of his dynasty. He must act as a father to his people, he said, and for their preservation abandon all other considerations.[1] Nothing in his career is more deserving of the admiration of posterity than

[1] Louis to Amelot, June 24, 1709. "Comme je tiens lieu de père à mes sujets, je dois préférablement à toute autre considération songer à leur conservation. Elle dépend de la paix, et je sais que je ne puis parvenir à la conclure aussi longtemps que le roi, mon petit fils, demeurera maître de l'Espagne."

the promptness with which he offered to sacrifice the aggrandizement of his family, rather than continue a disastrous war. As early as 1705, Louis suggested terms of peace which were more liberal than his opponents had then a right to demand. They met with no response. As the war proceeded, his desire for peace grew stronger. The concessions which he was willing to make are as surprising as the folly of his enemies, who refused to accept them. It is not worth while to trace the long negotiations, in which Louis constantly offered to yield more, and the allies constantly refused peace on any terms. In 1709, he consented to abandon the entire Spanish Succession, and to give the Dutch any barrier that they saw fit to demand. The next year he was ready to surrender, in addition, Strasbourg and Alsace, and he offered to contribute a large sum in money to assist the allies in driving his own grandson out of Spain, if they would concede to him the throne of Sicily as a retreat where he might still indulge in the luxury of calling himself a king. Unless Philip at once accepted the provision thus made for him, he should forfeit all, and every foot of the possessions of Spain might be given to the house of Austria.

These concessions went far beyond the demands which the allies had made when the war began. If William III. had still been alive, he would have accepted them with eagerness, as he had accepted Louis's offers at Ryswick, and for a second time he would have left the Emperor to whine in solitary selfishness. The man who now controlled the policy of England was a greater general than William, but he was far inferior to him in statesmanship as well as in patriotism. The Duke of Marlborough filled his letters to

his wife with his desires for peace and a tranquil mind, but he insisted on refusing the terms which Louis offered, only because he yearned for the power and the wealth which he expected from a continuation of the war.[1] The conduct of the Emperor was more intelligible. He was contributing little to carry on a contest of which he was to receive most of the gains. He was willing that the allies should continue to spend their money in an endeavor to obtain for his family the entire succession of Spain. His was the simple policy of perfect selfishness.

As to the Dutch, the situation in which they found themselves turned their heads. Their little republic seemed to be the arbitrator of Europe: it was setting up and pulling down monarchs, it was controlling the destinies of kings and emperors. The United Provinces did not show themselves equal to their great position, and they never again held the place in European politics which they now occupied. In the season of his great prosperity Louis had often erred from excessive pride, and had lost advantages which a more prudent policy would have secured. Never, however, had his conduct been so overbearing, so unreasonable, and so injudicious as that of the Dutch at the conferences of the Hague and Gertruydenberg. Like Louis, they were to be taught the wisdom of Mazarin's favorite maxim, that the prudent gamester quits when a winner and makes his gains sure.

[1] That such were his desires seems clear when we examine his conduct in connection with his correspondence with Godolphin and with his wife. As to the claim of his biographer, Coxe, that the duke was merely a passive agent in carrying out the instructions of the English cabinet, the Duke of Marlborough did not allow himself to remain passive when the policy indicated was contrary to his own interests and desires.

It cannot properly be said that the demands of the allies upon Louis were excessive; they would agree to no terms on which peace could be made. At first he was required to assist in dethroning his grandson, and later he was told that he must undertake that task without any aid from them. Louis had placed Philip on the throne of Spain, they said, and it was for Louis to drive him from it. Even should the French king submit to terms so humiliating and so odious, he would by no means secure peace for his people. He must forthwith surrender to the allies all the cities and territories which they were to receive, but for these he would obtain only a truce of two months. If during that time he had not expelled Philip from Spain, war against France would be at once resumed, and Louis would have gained nothing by surrendering towns and fortresses which it might require years to capture.[1] Such proposals were merely a mockery. It was as much beyond Louis's power to expel Philip from Spain within two months, as it was to overrun Holland or capture Vienna in the same time.

The conduct of the young king of Spain towards his grandfather was as unsatisfactory as that of his enemies. In the Duke of Anjou the Spanish had obtained a sovereign not much better fitted to rule over a great nation than the imbecile Charles whom he succeeded. He was a slow-witted, sluggish, indolent boy. That such should have been his character is not surprising. His mother a Bavarian princess, his grandmother the daughter of Philip IV., his great-grandmother the daughter of Philip III., were all women whose intelligence was as limited as their pedi-

[1] For these negotiations see *Mémoires de Torcy*, who represented France in most of them, and also *Journal de Torcy*.

gree was illustrious. The Bourbon kings, like many other monarchs, selected their wives without regard to strength of mind or vigor of body, and their posterity suffered. The scanty intelligence which Philip received from nature had not been improved by education. "The king of Spain is little educated," wrote his grandfather, "less even than befits his age." [1] The consciousness of his ignorance increased his natural diffidence. His voice was so thick that he could with difficulty be understood, and in taciturnity he excelled the nation which he was to govern. He walked slowly, his manner was preternaturally solemn, his mouth was usually open, he was grave and dull and docile.[2]

When he had reached his new kingdom he bore himself as one might expect. He sat moodily at the council board, thrust into his pockets unread the letters that were presented to him, and listened in gloomy silence. When the session was ended, he often threw himself back in his chair and wept.[3] He was troubled with vapors and melancholy; and though in battle he manifested a stolid physical courage, he was in constant apprehension of death.[4] He moped and lounged in his chamber, attended by his confessor or by some favorite; in the seclusion of his life he exceeded his Spanish predecessors. A king who could not govern others must himself be governed, and Philip's administration was conducted by the wives he married, and by the favorites who controlled the wives.

He first married a girl of thirteen, a daughter of

[1] Louis to Harcourt, December 15, 1700.
[2] *Lettres inédites de la Princesse Palatine*, 214, 219.
[3] Louville to Torcy, April 17, 30, 1701.
[4] *Mém. de Noailles*, 119.

the Duke of Savoy. As an adviser for the queen, Louis chose the Princess des Ursins, the daughter of a French duke and the widow of an Italian prince. The princess had already reached the mature age of sixty-five, and seemed a safe and a judicious counsellor.[1] She soon displayed a love of power which heretofore had found no opportunity for its exercise. She obtained absolute control over the young queen; and when she had acquired that, Philip was only her mouthpiece. For many years Mme. des Ursins may properly be regarded as the king of Spain. While she had a genius for the intrigues of the palace, for preserving her influence over an amiable girl and a slow-witted boy, she displayed less talent in the more important duties of a ruler.

No sooner had the war begun than Louis found that the entire burden of it was cast upon France. In Milan, for example, sixty thousand soldiers furnished by France, and two thousand Spaniards, were engaged in trying to save that province for Spain. While they contributed so little in men or money, the Spanish wished to furnish all the officers and enjoy all the dignities: the French could do the work, but they must give the orders.[2] Louis complained bitterly that upon his kingdom was thrown the entire weight of a war to preserve the integrity of Spain.[3] He obtained no satisfaction. The Spanish could do little and would do nothing. After the disasters of

[1] The year in which Mme. des Ursins was born is not accurately known. Some accounts make her seven years younger.

[2] Louville to Branvilliers, July 20, 1702. Louville acted as Philip's adviser in this campaign. He did not love the Spaniards, but he is a trustworthy witness.

[3] Louis to Marsin, October 31, 1702, *et passim.*

1708, Louis desired peace on any terms, and, if his grandson would abandon Spain, he could satisfy the conditions on which it could be obtained.[1] He endeavored to induce his grandson to resign a dignity which he believed it was impossible to preserve. "This war can never be ended," he wrote, "so long as Philip remains on the throne of Spain. It is necessary that he should recognize this sad truth."[2] But Philip replied that he would never abandon the throne, where God had placed him and his people wished him.[3] This determination, and the vigor with which it was asserted, were undoubtedly due to Mme. des Ursins, who held the purposes of the king of Spain in the hollow of her hand. She expressed her indignation that Louis should abandon the grandson whom he had put upon the throne, and expose him to the sad and despicable lot of an exiled king; that he should doom his own flesh and blood to the lamentable existence of the English phantom kings at St. Germain.[4] "We can no longer sustain you," answered Mme. de Maintenon; "we have great trouble to sustain ourselves. Do you want to destroy France and see the English at Paris?"[5] To this, if Mme. des Ursins had replied truthfully, she would have said that she preferred seeing the English at Paris to being herself expelled from Madrid.

Thus Louis could neither induce his grandson to abdicate, nor the allies to make peace. He issued an

[1] Louis to Amelot, June 14, 1709.

[2] Louis to Amelot, June 26, 1709.

[3] Philip to Louis, April 17, 1709, and correspondence of Amelot with Louis XIV.

[4] Mme. des Ursins to Chamillart, May 21, 1706; Letters for 1709, *passim.*

[5] Maintenon to Ursins, June 17, September 29, 1709.

appeal to his subjects, the only time during his reign, and the struggle went on. France seemed to have reached a state where she could neither obtain peace nor carry on war. The generals feared lest their armies should be dissolved, from their inability to feed them.[1] The news of an engagement was awaited with terrible apprehension. Tears were seen on every face when the intelligence came of the surrender of Lille. There were seditions even at Paris; scurrilous placards were found attached to the statues of Louis the Great; anonymous letters reproached the king and Mme. de Maintenon with the ruin of the people. She wrote in her despair: "Three Catholic kings seem abandoned by Providence, and heresy and injustice triumph. . . . To exist in the state in which we are now is not to live at all. God is against us, and we must submit."[2]

Notwithstanding years of defeat and the calamities of 1709, the condition would have been less critical had it not been for financial errors. Chamillart had tampered with the currency, and had put in circulation irredeemable bills of the government. Depreciation of the currency produced its inevitable results. Gold and silver were hoarded, or driven from the country. The lack of sufficient specie for ordinary circulation checked every branch of business. Bankers failed; the notes of merchants went to protest; there was no money with which to pay the taxes. The king sent his plate to the mint to be melted down, and his example was followed by most of the nobility.

[1] See correspondence of Villars with Louis and Chamillart, and *Mém. militaires sur la guerre de la Succession d'Espagne*, t. ix. and x.

[2] Letters of August 19, 1708; April 10, 1709.

Edicts were issued in order to improve the situation, but the laws of trade could not be controlled even by an absolute monarch. There is little doubt that the depreciation of the currency did more injury to France than the victories of Marlborough, and that it was an important factor in the desperate condition of that country in 1709.[1] The Dutch claimed that they might wisely continue the war when they could raise money at five per cent., and the advances which the French obtained cost them twenty per cent. By straining every nerve, the government was able to get through the year; if the soldiers were ill-fed and poorly paid, at least they were kept in the field. The financial condition somewhat improved. In 1710 there seemed less danger that the armies could no longer be held together, or that the administration would be brought to a standstill.

The fortunes of war also began to change. In his desire to compel Philip to abandon his throne, Louis had threatened to withdraw the French troops. "I did not suppose," wrote Mme. de Maintenon, "that we should be reduced to such extremities as to wish to see the king and queen of Spain dethroned."[2] When Louis was convinced that the allies would grant no terms of peace, he consented to send aid to his grandson, and the Duke of Vendôme assumed command of Philip's armies. The Archduke Charles had been declared king of Spain; his forces had overrun a large part of the country, and were now in possession of the capital. When the condition seemed desperate, the Castilians at last aroused themselves from

[1] Forbonnais, *Recherches*, etc., t. ii.; *Correspondance des Con. Gén.*, 1701–1708.

[2] Mme. de Maintenon to Ursins, June 24, 1709.

their habitual lethargy. Both men and money were freely given, and the archduke was obliged to abandon Madrid. In two brilliant victories, Vendôme captured Stanhope and the English troops, and defeated the army of the archduke at Villa Viciosa. A few thousand demoralized soldiers retreated into Catalonia, and by the end of December, 1710, the allies were as far removed from the conquest of Spain as when they had first invaded that country six years before.

A long series of calamities had destroyed the proverbial buoyancy and hopefulness of the French, and they could hardly credit the news of these successes. The king showed again the pride of his younger days; the courtiers welcomed the change of fortune as a miracle; Mme. de Maintenon sent her three hundred and thirty maidens at St. Cyr to their prayers, and bade them praise God for the victory.[1] The tide had now turned, and in the following year a new administration in England began the negotiations which resulted in the peace of Utrecht. The terms of that treaty were substantially those which were agreed upon in the secret conferences between the representatives of France and the Tory ministers who now controlled the policy of Queen Anne. Philip V. was recognized as king of Spain and the Indies; Austria received Milan, Naples, Sardinia, and the Spanish Low Countries; the Duke of Savoy obtained Sicily and the title of a king, as the recompense of years of intrigues and infidelities, as judicious as they had been unscrupulous. The barrier against French invasion, which the Dutch had so earnestly desired, was established. It did not contain all the fortresses which Louis

[1] Maintenon to Ursins, December 22, 29, 1710.

had offered in 1710, but it was sufficient for their protection.

The English were the chief gainers by the treaty of Utrecht. There was no reason why this should not have been the case. They had contributed most to the successful prosecution of the war; they secured for their allies more than had been demanded at the outset. To carry on war solely to benefit one's neighbor has never been customary, and it is hard to see why such a course should be especially praiseworthy. Gibraltar and Minorca were now ceded to the English by Spain; from France they received Newfoundland and the Hudson Bay Territory; they were granted extensive trade privileges, largely at the expense of the French; they obtained for a period of thirty years the valuable monopoly of the slave trade of the West Indies. Such a traffic seems odious to us, but the trade in negroes was regarded then as the trade in cattle is now; it was a commerce of which any nation would gladly have the monopoly, and the legality and morality of which were not questioned; no one was more disturbed by the idea of catching and selling negroes than of catching and selling steers. Louis was obliged to agree that Dunkirk should be dismantled, and that the Pretender should be expelled. This was painful to his pride, but it would have been better for his interests if the Stuarts had been sent away twenty years before.

The advantages secured by the treaty of Utrecht are the first of the gains made by England during the eighteenth century which established her position as the great colonial power. The concessions which France was obliged to make were among the long series of errors and disasters by which the plans of

Richelieu and Colbert were brought to naught, and French influence failed to be of large importance in the colonization of the world.

The peace of Utrecht has often been declared a reproach to England, and to the English statesmen who were responsible for it. It is difficult to see any ground for such charges. Undoubtedly there was much in the manner in which the negotiations were carried on that was undignified and inconsistent with good faith. But Harley and Bolingbroke were justified alike in the terms to which they agreed, and in undertaking by themselves to obtain peace for Europe. There was no reason why England should carry on indefinitely a gigantic war without any adequate object. To ask the Dutch to join in the negotiations for peace would have insured their failure. As for the Emperor, it does not seem that wisdom required England to continue a war in order to satisfy the ambition of an ally who, as was justly said, expected everything and did nothing.

Certainly Louis, in order to obtain peace, would have conceded more than he was required to by the treaty of Utrecht. Mme. de Maintenon declared it to be a miracle that established Philip on the throne of Spain.[1] It does not follow that because Louis would have surrendered more, it would have been wise for the English to insist upon his doing so. The elder brother of the archduke died in the spring of 1711, and Charles was chosen Emperor in his place. If the balance of power was the object of the war, the English would have been justified in fighting to keep Philip on the throne of Spain, instead of continuing to fight in order to secure the Spanish mon-

[1] Maintenon to Ursins, November 16, 1711, *et pas.*

archy for a prince who was also Emperor. There was, indeed, a possibility that Philip might inherit the throne of France. Solemn renunciations of his rights were signed by him as one of the conditions of peace; they were ratified by the Cortes; they were registered with the Parliament of Paris; they were executed with the same formalities as Maria Theresa's renunciation of the Spanish Succession, and they would have been violated with the same unconcern. Had Louis XV. died when a child, there is little doubt that Philip would have become king of France. There is as little doubt that the throne of Spain would have been given to a younger son, in the same manner that the dauphin had surrendered his rights to Philip. Such would have been the desire of the French; such would have been the demand of the Spanish; such had been the policy laid down by Louis XIV. On the other hand, Charles, who wished to be king of Spain, was already Emperor, and he insisted on being both. The reëstablishment of the empire of Charles V. would have been an extraordinary conclusion of a war begun to preserve the balance of power. Marlborough and the Whigs declared that the safety and liberty of Europe would be in danger, if Spain and the West Indies were left to the house of Bourbon. How mistaken they were is shown by subsequent history. Bourbon kings ruled in Spain, but they did not make France dangerous to Europe during the eighteenth century. On the contrary, she was a much less formidable power than she had been during the century before. The Bourbon kings at Madrid made war and made peace with the Bourbon kings at Versailles, precisely as they would have done if there had not been a drop of common blood in their veins.

When France was again formidable to Europe, the fact that a descendant of Louis XIV. reigned at Madrid added no more to her power than the fact that a descendant of Mustapha III. was reigning at Constantinople.

Holland and the Emperor were unwilling to accept the terms to which the English had agreed, and they continued the war without their aid. The victory of the French at Denain in 1712 secured peace. The engagement was not one of any magnitude; a detachment of Eugene's army was attacked and cut to pieces; but the results were most important. Eugene was obliged to raise the siege of Landrecies; the French captured several of the cities which they had lost; it was evident that France was no longer as exhausted as she had appeared in 1709, and discouragement prevailed among the allies. In April, 1713, the treaty of Utrecht was signed by all the hostile powers except the Emperor. Here, as frequently, Austria stood out to the last, and gained nothing by her obstinacy. A few defeats in 1713 forced the Emperor to make peace in the next year, and his claims upon the Spanish throne, though not formally renounced, were practically abandoned.[1]

Spain was among the last to join in a treaty which secured to her tranquillity and the sovereign of her choice. This delay was chiefly due to the vanity of Mme. des Ursins. It was with reluctance that Philip agreed to the required concessions and renunciations, but on those points Louis succeeded in convincing his grandson that he must take what was offered to him, or fare much worse. Mme. des Ursins was the more easily reconciled because she obtained from

[1] *Actes de la Paix d'Utrecht.*

Philip the promise of a petty principality, to be carved out of the Lowlands, where she might assume the dignity of an independent sovereign. The allies met this proposal with contempt, Mme. de Maintenon warned her friend that she was prolonging the war, but Philip would make no peace without the principality.[1] Only after long delay and by the united resolution of Louis XIV. and all Europe, was the obstinate old woman driven to abandon her dream.[2] Then, at last, she allowed her pupil to agree to the terms of the treaty. Her extraordinary tenure of power was soon to have a dramatic ending. In 1714, the queen of Spain died. The king had been a most uxorious husband, and he lamented his wife's death, but after the fashion of royalty. He was at the chase when the funeral cortége passed, in which the remains of Marie Louise of Savoy were conveyed to the Escurial. The king watched it until out of sight, and then proceeded with the hunt.[3] Philip's character was so well known that all recognized the necessity of providing him at once with another wife. Mme. des Ursins was a woman of almost eighty, but she still possessed some of the attractions of middle age and all of the vanities of youth. It was thought not impossible that she might decide upon herself as a proper wife for Philip, and drive him to the altar. Such a possibility excited dismay at the court of Versailles. It is said that she caused

[1] Maintenon to Ursins, August 7, 1713.

[2] Philip refused to sign the treaty with Holland because that country would not guarantee a sovereignty to the Princess des Ursins, and Louis was obliged to use threats to compel his grandson to join in it. "Mon intention," he wrote, "n'a jamais été de faire la guerre pour elle." — Louis to Chateauneuf.

[3] *Mém. de St. Simon*, x. 133. "Are these princes made like other mortals?" asks the chronicler.

Philip to be sounded upon the subject, but the limit of his docility had been reached, and he replied to the suggestion of marriage, "Oh, no, not that." [1] At all events, she abandoned the idea, if she had ever entertained it, and she selected for the position a princess of Parma. She thought that she could rely on the gratitude of a petty princess whom she thus elevated to be a great queen, and she was doubtless deceived as to her character.[2] At the head of a retinue of the principal nobles and officials of the kingdom, she proceeded to meet her new mistress. The overthrow of the favorite had already been decided upon, either by the caprice of the queen or from the advice of others. Mme. des Ursins was coldly received, and she shortly retired to confer with her mistress. Soon the queen rushed out, calling her officers to take that woman from the room and instantly carry her out of Spain. Those who were thus addressed hardly dared to lift their hands against the person whom they had long regarded as their real sovereign. She was, however, put in a carriage in a cold winter's night, with no opportunity to change her dress, and driven almost without food or rest, by day or night, over roads covered with snow, until the boundaries of the kingdom had been reached. In her amazement at such conduct, she was consoled by the belief that swift couriers would soon overtake them with orders for her return from the king himself. In this expectation, also, she was deceived. Elizabeth Farnese soon

[1] *Mém. de St. Simon*, x. 154. The authority is not beyond question on this point.

[2] Before the princess reached Spain, Mme. des Ursins became apprehensive as to the character of her new mistress. — Daubigny to Torcy, December 17, 1714.

reached Philip, and it needed but a few hours to establish her dominion over so pliant a subject. The king announced to his astonished courtiers that, while Mme. des Ursins had rendered great services to the state, she had failed in respect to her mistress, and from that day her name was heard no more from his royal lips.[1] He was truly sorry for what had occurred, said this most submissive of husbands, but, as he wished to live in harmony with the queen, he could not show any resentment.[2]

The new queen and her favorites succeeded to the authority which Mme. des Ursins had so long and so despotically exercised. She was almost fourscore, but unlike her rival, Mme. de Maintenon, she did not seek retreat from worldly greatness in the religious tranquillity of a convent. As she found no real sovereign with whom she could establish herself, she took refuge in the court of the English Pretender at Rome. There she exercised a large control; her time was employed in plans and plots for imaginary sovereigns; she continued to enjoy the flavor of affairs of state, the reminiscence of her days of power, until her death at the age of eighty-seven.

[1] The best authority for this is St. Simon, *Mémoires*, xi. 74–84, to whom Mme. des Ursins gave a full history of this curious transaction.

[2] Orry to Torcy, January 5, 1715.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CLOSE OF THE REIGN OF LOUIS XIV.

1712–1715.

Not only the calamities of the war of the Spanish Succession, but a series of domestic bereavements, cast a gloom over the closing years of Louis XIV.'s career. In 1711, his only son, the dauphin, was carried off by the small-pox. He had lived little respected, and he died little regretted. His character was indeed negative to an extraordinary degree, and he possessed, it was said, neither vices nor virtues, neither tastes nor desires. One thing only he had done with zeal, and that was to hunt wolves. No man living had killed so many wolves. He hunted them leisurely, as befitted his temperament, riding deliberately, incurring no risks, but devoting to their pursuit a very large part of the fifty years of his life. The nullity of his character was in part due to the imperious nature of his father. Louis intrusted no authority to his son. When the dauphin was beginning to be an old man, he was still treated by his father as a child of six; the humblest attendant was no more awed and embarrassed in the presence of the great monarch than was the heir apparent to the throne.

The dauphin's oldest son, the Duke of Burgundy, now became the heir apparent. It was only for a

short period. Early in 1712 a malignant fever attacked the Duchess of Burgundy, and in a few days she was dead. Her death was followed by that of her husband and of their oldest son. On the same day, the remains of the three were deposited among the tombs of the French monarchs at St. Denis. Three successive dauphins of France, the son, grandson, and great-grandson of Louis XIV., died suddenly within a year.

The Duke of Burgundy was the pupil of Fénelon; he was a man of exemplary life, of serious purposes; had he reigned, it has been thought that a golden age would have come for France, that the course of history would have been changed, and the benefits of the Revolution might have been obtained, without its horrors.

There seems to have been little ground on which to base these sanguine expectations. The Duke of Burgundy was doubtless an amiable young man; he died when only twenty-nine, and it is possible that his views would have broadened with years and experience. He would not have devoted his life to hunting wolves, like his father, nor to debauchery, like his son; he was neither an idler nor a profligate. Unfortunately, however, men of the most unexceptionable morals often make very poor kings. There is every reason to think that the Duke of Burgundy would have sought to reform the state, not by progress but by retrogression. His ideals of government were in the ages that were past, and it would have been impossible to apply them in the France of his day. He wished to restore to the aristocracy an influence which would have been as much out of season as a feudal castle; in religion he was the narrowest of bigots; he approved of the revo-

cation of the Edict of Nantes; he was even more adverse to toleration than his grandfather; to recall the Huguenots, he said, would be an impious measure, and fraught with dangers to the country. His religious practices were not of the character which indicate a broad mind; he observed the services, the fasts, the minutest regulations of the church, with a rigor that would have been commendable in the time of St. Louis, but seemed unseasonable in the age of Voltaire. Even his grandfather sometimes sneered, when the duke would not leave matins or complines to attend to important matters of state. He disapproved of the theatre; he thought that opera airs savored of sin; he has recorded his surprise at finding pure morals inculcated by the pagan writers of antiquity. He was apprehensive of savants, and feared that any increase of knowledge among the lower classes would be prejudicial to the state. A simple-minded peasant, who could neither read nor write, he regarded as a better citizen than a scholar in search of new truths in science or politics.

He had occasionally been given the command of an army, but he had shown no capacity for the management of men. He was not timid physically, but he was irresolute and helpless in any crisis, and the disasters of the campaign of Oudenarde were largely due to his inefficiency. When the army marched from Tournay and a battle was imminent, the duke joined the bishop in praying for victory, instead of advising with his generals as to the means to obtain it.

He gave his opinion on the question of whether the Pretender should be treated as king of England, and declared that no honest man should hesitate to recognize the prince who was a legitimate sovereign. When

Louis was uncertain, the duke was in distress, and he was overjoyed when his grandfather was induced to commit one of the most serious mistakes of his long reign.[1] Nothing that the Duke of Burgundy ever did or said indicates that he was fitted to rule France in the eighteenth century with wisdom; like Charles I. of England, he had neither the instinct to be in harmony with the drift of opinion, nor the force to control it. It is not the wicked men, but the wrong-headed, who do the most harm. The Duke of Burgundy would probably have been as impotent as Louis XVI. to arrest the course of the French Revolution.[2]

The deaths of the duke and his amiable wife were the only misfortunes which seem to have caused genuine grief to Louis XIV. The pleasures of the court had gone on with hardly a check when Louis's son died, but at the loss of his grandson the old king was perceptibly affected. His court had long lost some of its early splendor; and the views of the king, and still more those of Mme. de Maintenon, became stricter with years. She questioned the propriety of the profane music for which Louis still had a strong taste; she feared that the ladies of the court wore their dresses too low; while she admitted that piety was now the fashion, she distrusted the sincerity of many of its professors.[3] The burden of entertaining the king, who had become old and despondent, weighed

[1] See letter of Duke of Burgundy to Philip V., October, 1701.

[2] The best authorities for the views and character of the Duke of Burgundy are his papers, published by his eulogist, the Abbé Proyart, and the memoirs of St. Simon, who was his confidant, and one of his most ardent admirers. See, also, *Projets du Gouvernement du Duc de Bourgogne*, a system of reforms prepared by St. Simon and published by Mesnard.

[3] *Lettres éd. de Mme. de Maintenon*, ii. 446; vi. 269.

upon her, and she longed for the hour when she could find a permanent retreat at St. Cyr.

Religious wrangling disturbed the last years of the king's life. His confessor was now Father Le Tellier, an intriguing and intolerant Jesuit. By him the Pope was induced to issue the famous bull Unigenitus, which anathematized many of the doctrines of the Jansenists, and, as it was claimed, many tenets which had the authority of the Bible as well as of Jansenius. The endeavor to force both clergy and laity to profess their faith in the Unigenitus continued a cause of dissension and persecution in France for more than half a century, and made as many unbelievers as the writings of the Encyclopædists.

The king was ignorant in religious matters, and he could be easily controlled by an unscrupulous casuist. He was brought to give his assent to the destruction of the ancient monastery of Port Royal in the Fields, so famous for the piety and the genius of those who had been connected with it. The aged sisters, who still remained there, were carried off under the charge of gens d'armes, as if they had been the inmates of a disorderly house; the church and the convent were torn down, and not a stone left standing; even the dead who were there buried were taken from their resting-places. Such an act of vandalism marked the culmination of the religious policy of the age of Louis XIV.

In the summer of 1715, the king's health began to decline. It seems almost certain that, if he had been treated with skill, his life could have been prolonged for many years. His constitution was one of extraordinary vigor; his habits had been of unusual regularity; he had daily taken a great deal of outdoor

exercise; he could expect to pass fourscore untroubled by physical decrepitude. His case did not receive proper treatment. His physician insisted that the ailment was not serious, until it was too late to arrest its progress. Such has been the advance of science that the humblest of us would now be promptly cured of a malady which, in the eighteenth century, shortened the life of the greatest king of Europe.

In the latter part of August it was known that Louis had but a few days to live. He met death with the dignity and self-possession that he had shown during all his life. One after another his principal officials and the members of his family were brought in to see him for the last time. For each he had some fitting words of kindly reminder, or of judicious advice. He thanked his courtiers for their faithful service, and expressed the hope that they would sometimes think of him. "I pass away," he added, "but the state remains forever. Continue faithful to it, and set an example to my other subjects." The young prince who was to succeed him was brought to his bedside. "You will be a great king," he said, "but your happiness will depend upon your submission to God, and the care which you take to relieve your people. For this reason you must avoid war as much as possible. It is the ruin of the people. Do not follow the bad example which I have set you. I have undertaken war too lightly, and have continued it from vanity. Do not imitate me, but be a pacific prince, and let your chief occupation be to relieve your subjects." [1]

[1] Dangeau, xvi. 126, 128. Dangeau is the most trustworthy authority on these remarks, as he is on anything concerning the king's private life.

Whatever were Louis's faults, he always recognized the responsibility of a monarch to those whom he ruled. The child whom he advised was, unhappily, to grow up destitute of any sense of responsibility.

The king said to Mme. de Maintenon that he had heard much of the difficulty of dying, but, now that the dreaded moment had come, he found it very easy. She stayed by him until he had lost consciousness. Then she felt that her duty was accomplished: she bade farewell to her servants, abandoned the court where she had long wearied of her extraordinary fortune, and retired to the convent of St. Cyr, there to stay during the remaining years of her life. Louis bade adieu to earthly greatness with tranquillity, and Mme. de Maintenon with eagerness. On September 1, 1715, Louis XIV. died. He was not quite seventy-seven, and he had been king of France for over seventy-two years. His was the longest reign in French history.

The reign of Louis XIV., extending over almost three quarters of a century, and controlled during all that time by the same political principles, furnished an opportunity for the full development of the theory of government which that monarch professed. It contrasts forcibly with the rapid fluctuations of more recent times. A period of equal length in French history takes us from the time when Turgot was dismissed from the counsels of Louis XVI. because his policy was too liberal, to the republic of 1848; in that of England, from the endeavors of George III. to increase the influence of the crown, to the repeal of the corn laws under Peel; in that of the United States, from the day that Washington was first inaugurated President, to the battle of Bull Run. When we con-

sider the changes in political institutions, in social conditions, in intellectual beliefs, which those countries have experienced during seventy years, we can appreciate the results produced by a government which, during such a period, followed an unchanging policy.

The theory of government which was professed by Louis XIV., and which during his reign was brought to a high degree of development, was, that the absolute power of the monarch should be unfettered either by the aristocracy, by the representatives of the nation, or by the action of independent local bodies. Authority, as he believed, should be lodged in the king alone, and upon the central government should devolve the care of the interests of the kingdom as a whole, and of the smaller political bodies of which it was composed.

The growth of royal power at the expense of the authority once exercised by a feudal aristocracy was far from being a novel principle; it was not devised by Richelieu, nor first developed by Louis XIV. Such had been the tendency of French development from the days of Hugh Capet, from the time when it can properly be said that there was a kingdom of France. It had been interrupted by many vicissitudes, by the misery and disasters of the Hundred Years' War, and more recently by the wars of religion; but though its progress had been slow, it had also been sure. This development of the royal office was required, alike that France might exercise a larger influence, and that she might enjoy a greater prosperity. With but few exceptions during a period of six hundred years, when the authority of the king was well established, the country enjoyed comparative order and prosperity;

and when the authority of the king was impaired, the influence and the well-being of France were lessened. In other words, order and the opportunity for improvement were only found under the protection of the monarch.

The condition of France when Richelieu assumed power was far removed from that of France under Philip the Fair or Louis XI. The cardinal found the influence of the aristocracy diminished, and he left it more diminished. The Prince of Condé, under the regency of Marie de Medici, no longer possessed an independent authority such as had been exercised by the Duke of Brittany under Louis XI. He was, however, a much more powerful nobleman than his grandson under Louis XIV. When the reign of Louis XIII. began, there were nobles who still had a certain degree of local influence and authority, who retained some relics of their feudal foothold, whose position did not depend wholly on the offices with which they might be intrusted by the king. This was not so a century later. The nobility still possessed privileges, but they no longer possessed power. Princes and dukes looked to the monarch's warrant for their authority, and they could look nowhere else. Deprived of that, they were as powerless as an artisan in his shop, or a peasant on his acre of land.

It was the policy of Richelieu to destroy the remnants of authority of the feudal aristocracy. His traditions were followed by Mazarin and Louis XIV. The troubles of the Fronde do not deserve the name of an aristocratic, much less of a popular reaction. They were the turmoils excited by selfish intriguers against the authority of an unpopular foreigner; their only importance was in the harm which they did.

The reactionary tendencies of the little group of well-meaning and unwise men, who built their hopes upon the Duke of Burgundy, had no opportunity for their development. At no time after the death of Mazarin was there any more possibility of a French nobleman asserting his authority against that of the king, than there is of the Duke of Devonshire inciting a rebellion against Queen Victoria.

The overthrow of the independent authority of the aristocracy was certainly advantageous to France. Their influence had ceased to be beneficial; it was impossible that it should continue to exist. A gradual waning of their power has been the usual fate of bodies which, like the French aristocracy, constituted a privileged caste. The English nobility consisted of a number of persons possessing a certain political authority, who were freely recruited from the commonalty, whose families were commoners, who had themselves often been commoners for a good part of their lives. They long continued the leaders of a community with which, to a large extent, they were identified in feeling and sentiment. But in France every member of a noble family was noble. The privileges which belonged to the duke belonged to all his offspring. They were removed from the rest of the nation, as he was himself. Like the sons of the Brahmin, they were of a different caste from the Pariah. They could not become the representatives of a community from which they were separated by law and by sentiment. Members of the third estate were ennobled, or were allowed to share in the immunities possessed by the nobility, but the body of nobles, though increased, remained distinct. In the eighteenth century there were in France over 200,000

persons noble by birth, privileged by law, constituting one of the three estates of the kingdom.[1] In England under Queen Anne, about two hundred members constituted the order of the peerage. Such a difference goes far to account for the different political development of the two countries. The authority of the French throne was sufficient to destroy the power of the nobility, and it could also have accomplished the task of making them equal before the law with the rest of the community. The attempt was not made. Such a measure would have been a social revolution, but more than any one change it would have tended to avert a political revolution, and to preserve the monarchy as an institution in France. The history of the eighteenth century shows how the continuance of prerogatives and immunities which had no longer any reason for existence, which were the rudimentary and atrophied organs of political life, helped to prepare the Revolution of 1789.

The incurable egoism of the privileged could be overborne only by the monarchy. Cities, officials, burgesses, trades, as well as nobles and clergy, possessed privileges, different in degree, but all to some extent galling. It was contrary to human nature that these should be voluntarily surrendered. No men have ever been granted advantages by the law, whether social, political, or commercial, without honestly believing that the safety and welfare of the state depended upon their preservation. So far, therefore, as the monarchy attacked the position of the aristocracy, the criticism to be passed upon the government

[1] This figure represents the entire body of nobles of all ages. M. Taine estimates the number at only 140,000, which seems to me to be too low.

of Louis XIV. is, not that it went too far, but that it did not go far enough.

The question is more embarrassing when we consider the influence of the centralizing tendencies of his reign upon the local institutions of France. There were two causes for the existence of numerous and diversified forms of local government and provincial institutions in that country. Such had been the condition of all European countries during the Middle Ages. France itself had been built up, province by province, and sometimes city by city, the newly acquired territories retaining the privileges and customs which they had possessed before they were merged into the kingdom of the French. Thus few countries originally contained a greater diversity of legal systems and local institutions. In no other nation, perhaps, has the tendency been stronger towards centralization. The Revolution followed in the footsteps of Richelieu and Louis XIV., and its traditions are adopted by the French republic of to-day.

The results of the action of many of these local bodies were unsatisfactory. Incoherent powers in sterile union accomplished nothing.[1] Yet even in their imperfect development they possessed some of the advantages which usually belong to the regulation of local affairs by those of the vicinage. In a few of the provinces representative bodies still existed, having an authority analogous to that of the States General for the kingdom. They were regarded by the government with an evil eye. The governors were directed to shorten their sessions.[2] "The close of the States,"

[1] Thomas, *Une province sous Louis XIV.*

[2] Colbert to superintendent, December 19, 1670. "Vous ne sauriez rien faire de plus agréable à sa Majesté que de terminer en peu de temps l'assemblée des Estats de Languedoc." See, also, *Lettres*, iv. 63 *et pas.*

wrote a minister, "is the end of agitation and of vexation to good citizens." [1]

The States were warned that unless they were submissive, it would be long before they would again be allowed to assemble.[2] The superintendents disputed their jurisdiction. They were abolished in many of the provinces where they had once existed. Languedoc, Provence, Burgundy, Brittany, and Artois were the principal districts in which provincial States still remained. Under Louis XIV., their power of fixing the quota to be contributed by the province to the general government became little more than nominal, but it was not so at the beginning of his reign. Then the amount of the grant was often a subject of long wrangling between the assemblies and the representatives of the crown. The nobles and the clergy were usually ready to accede to any demands made by the sovereign, but the delegates of the third estate were less tractable. "This is excusable," wrote a governor, "because it is the third estate which has to bear almost all the impositions." [3] Various measures were adopted to induce the delegates to comply with the king's desires. The unruly were sometimes sent into banishment; money was freely used; a large proportion of the delegates could be reached by bribes, and the authorities at Paris authorized the expenditure of the requisite sums.[4] These evidences of independence disappeared as the absolute authority of Louis

[1] *Cor. Adm.*, i. 13.

[2] *Lettres de Colbert*, iv. 68. "Vous pouvez les assurer que de longtemps ils ne se verront ensemble." — Letter to Count of Grignan, December 11, 1671.

[3] Louis of Bourbon to Colbert, June 18, 1662.

[4] The details of this can be found in *Lettres de Colbert* and *Correspondance Administrative sous Louis XIV.*

XIV. became firmly established. "I speak in the name of a king, and a king who rules," said the Prince of Conti to the States of Languedoc. The governor had only to announce the requirements of the sovereign, and they were acceded to without question.

Still the condition of the provinces which retained their local States was usually more prosperous than that of the rest of France. Even if they were subjected to the same burdens, the collection was in their own hands, and this advantage was sufficient to affect materially the condition of the people. The cost of carrying on the state is a grave problem at all times, but the question of taxation was more serious in the age of Louis XIV. than it is to-day. The expense of the government was larger in proportion to the wealth of the community. The maintenance of large armies, the salaries of an inordinate number of officials, as well as the costly surroundings of the sovereign, made the administration of Louis XIV. as expensive as modern governments, while the wealth of the country was vastly less. Not only did the taxes consume a larger part of the national income, but the exemption of the richer classes from a considerable portion of their burden rendered it more grievous for the poor. This condition was aggravated by the cost of collection. When we consider the profits of the farmers of taxes, the frauds of officials, the forced sales of the cows, the crops, and the furniture of the peasant who had no ready money, it is not too much to say that every hundred francs of which the government had the benefit cost one hundred and fifty francs to the taxpayer.[1] Now, the expense of collecting one hundred francs does not amount to two francs.

[1] Bois Guillebert, a governmental official, estimated the cost

The effect of Colbert's reforms was shown in the increased prosperity which France enjoyed during the first years of his administration. Colbert, however, was too conservative to introduce any radical changes in the imposition and collection of taxes. Under him a bad system was well administered. Under his successors the same system remained, and the former evils reappeared. One marked difference distinguished the provinces with local States, and its effects illustrate the importance of wisdom in modes of taxation. It is much the fashion to sneer at economic laws, and to deride the theorists who attach weight to them. The study of history shows that the communities by which they are disregarded suffer in purse, as much as the populations of the East who disregard the laws of hygiene suffer in health. In the most of France, the taille was imposed on the supposed amount of the personal property of the taxpayer. Its imposition was attended by the irregularities and the abuses that are inseparable from that system. One was taxed too much; another escaped altogether. One lived in squalor, lest he should be suspected of having money; another corrupted the assessor and was left off the roll; his neighbors were obliged to pay his quota, and sought in vain for redress.[1] In the provinces where the taille was collected by means of the local States, it was imposed upon the land. It was assessed and collected with ease and with cer-

of collecting at a much higher figure.— Letter to Vauban, August 22, 1704. A *décret* of 1709 says that the expense of collection in Burgundy, which was a *pays d'Etats*, was from one fourth to one half of the amount of the taille.

[1] There are innumerable complaints of such abuses in the official correspondence.

tainty. There were few unjust exemptions; the rate was free from violent fluctuation; farmers and peasants bought land or adjusted their rents with reference to an impost which was certain and uniform. The contemporary writers all admit the advantages of a system which the general government failed to introduce in the rest of France.[1]

In the administration of the smaller local bodies we find less efficiency and more extravagance. A great number of municipalities still retained the right to choose their local officers, and exercised a considerable degree of self-government. Some of these could trace their institutions back to the days of the Roman dominion. Others held their charters for services rendered their sovereign in wars against Edward of England or Charles of Burgundy. Many had received grants of privileges from their feudal lord, which had been confirmed by the monarch. These local rights were much curtailed under Louis XIV., usually upon the pretext that the inefficiency of the officials needed the supervision of the general government. Such accusations were often well founded. Most of the towns had incurred liabilities which they met with difficulty. In proportion to their wealth, the cities were more heavily in debt in the seventeenth century than they are in the nineteenth.[2] Many of them were

[1] Colbert was among those who perceived the advantages derived from this mode of taxation. He seems to have desired its extension, but he was unable to carry his projects into execution. Arthur Young, *Travels*, p. 20, edit. of 1889, says: "We are now in Berri, a province governed by a provincial assembly; consequently the roads good and made without corvées." This provincial assembly in Berri was recent, but in a few years it effected great improvements in the condition of the province.

[2] Illustrations of this can be found in *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux*, and in *Lettres de Colbert*.

entirely bankrupt. The revision of their indebtedness, which Colbert undertook, proved so great a task that it was not completed during the twenty-two years of his ministry.

The local officers were usually chosen by a small body of electors, the principal burgesses of the town. On the whole, their administration was no better than that of our modern city governments, elected by universal suffrage. It is doubtful whether it was as good. Inefficiency was common and corruption was not rare. There are constant complaints of the expenses of the officials. Mayors and aldermen went up to Paris, nominally to protect the interests of their fellow-citizens, and enjoyed at their expense a trip which was as rare a luxury then as a journey to America is now. Junketing at the cost of the community was a more serious evil in Marseilles and Bordeaux than it is in New York and Philadelphia.[1] The citizens of Marseilles complained that their consuls must needs go to Aix with a coach-and-four, and spend over five thousand livres in the display of unbecoming style.[2] Large disbursements were often explained by the necessity of bribing the ministers and courtiers whose assistance was sought. The deputy of Boulogne wrote his constituents that he had given four hundred and fifty florins to persons of distinction, in order that they might favor the interests of the city.[3]

By a series of edicts Louis XIV. deprived these cen-

[1] The references to such trips, and complaints of their exorbitant cost, are very frequent in the documents relating to municipalities.

[2] *Arch. Nat. H.*, 1314.

[3] *Inv. Arch. Boulogne*, 988, cited by Babeau, *La ville sous l'ancien régime.*

tres of local political life of the independence which they had enjoyed. The cities were forbidden to levy any new imposts, except by authority of the king.[1] They were required to submit their expenses to the superintendent, who represented the general government, and these could not exceed a specified amount without the consent of the royal council.[2] In 1692, the right to elect municipal officers was taken from them; the general government assumed this function, and disposed of the offices at prices varying with their importance and their emoluments. This measure seemed to extinguish what little life was still left in the municipal organizations. Like many other important political changes, it was adopted solely as a means of raising money. Kings have destroyed the liberties of their subjects from a desire to get money, as subjects in turn have overthrown the authority of their kings from an unwillingness to pay it. Louis sold these offices to those who wished to purchase them, but he was equally willing to sell them to the municipal corporations themselves. The most of them clung to the remnants of their political existence, and purchased from the government the right to choose their own officials. The process was so simple, and usually so efficacious, a way of raising money, that it was several times resorted to during the eighteenth century. A city paid for the privilege of electing its officers, only to be deprived of it after a few years, unless it would again pay ransom for its independence.

The vitality of the city and town governments in France was thus impaired during the reign of Louis

[1] Arrêt of 1665.

[2] Edict of April, 1683.

XIV., and never again have they possessed the importance which they had during the Middle Ages. In the eighteenth century, a country parish could not repair the roof of the church which the wind had damaged, nor rebuild the crumbling wall of the parsonage, without the authority of the government.[1] The theories of centralized administration under the old régime survived the Revolution, and are found with little modification in the French republic.

It is probable that the material condition of these small political bodies was benefited by the change; the superintendent was usually a much more intelligent man than the mayor or the alderman, and he was quite as honest. The injury which resulted from this phase of centralization was indirect. The townspeople lost their interest in affairs over which they exercised merely a nominal control. At Dijon, early in Louis's reign, 1,500 and 1,600 votes were cast at municipal elections, in 1711 only 311, and only 349 in 1714. The history both of England and of the United States shows that the education of the citizen in the management of the affairs of his town or city is the best training for an intelligent performance of his duties as a member of the state. The man who has acquired correct views about country roads and the town pump is usually fitted to vote and act with judgment on questions which affect the welfare of the republic. The French of the provinces were deprived of this training. They remained ignorant and apathetic concerning a government in which they had no part. "A parish," said Turgot, "is a collection of hovels, and of inhabitants who are as passive as their huts." All intellectual and political life centred in Paris. The

[1] Tocqueville, *L'ancien Régime*, 75.

influence of that city on the revolutions of the last hundred years is one of their most striking features. The destiny of France has been decided at Paris, as that of the empire was decided at Rome. This was not the case to the same extent in the earlier history of the kingdom. To the centralizing tendencies of the reign of Louis XIV. the increase in the influence of the capital was largely due.

The French Parliaments were also subjected to vigorous repression at the hands of the king; they were stripped of their political power. The part taken by the Parliament of Paris in the disturbances of the Fronde excited the animosity of Louis XIV. while he was still a lad. Parliament and Jansenist were the two names which, during all his life, were most odious to him. One of his first public performances, when only a youth of sixteen, had been to appear before the Parliament of Paris, booted and spurred and with whip in hand, and to tell the members roughly that he demanded an unquestioning obedience. It was then that the famous apocryphal remark, "L'état c'est moi," was supposed to have been uttered by the young king.[1]

The Parliaments during Louis's reign were forced to confine themselves to their legitimate duties; they were judicial bodies and nothing more. The tenacious spirit of these organizations was not overcome during the sixty years that they dared not question the command of the master. Immediately after Louis's death, they were influential enough to treat with the regent, and to set aside the will of the sovereign whom they had long obeyed. We shall find them in the eighteenth century playing an active, though not often a

[1] *France under Richelieu and Mazarin*, ii. 279.

useful, part in the state. These bodies of lawyers were more successful in resisting the attacks of the central government than any other of the political institutions of France; but this power of resistance was not accompanied by an equal amount of wisdom. Of the political organizations, which were to some extent independent of the monarchy, the Parliaments were the most tenacious of life, and their existence was of the least value to the community.[1]

When Louis died, in 1715, the population of France had somewhat diminished; trade was disordered, and agriculture was not prosperous. In a famous passage, La Bruyère has described the condition of the peasants under Louis XIV.: "One sees certain wild animals, male and female, scattered over the country, black, livid, burned by the sun, attached to the soil, which they cultivate with an invincible pertinacity. They have an articulate voice, and when they stand erect they show a human face, and in fact they are men. At night they retire into their dens; they live on water, black bread, and roots."[2]

This picture is somewhat overcolored. Certainly, the condition of the tillers of the soil was sufficiently miserable. They were often hungry and always dirty. But the great moralist was led by his love of glittering contrasts to make his portrait more striking than the original. He intended by his description to show how despicable was the condition of the peasants, quite as much as to show how lamentable it was. An evil in French society, far more serious than the lack

[1] An account of the organization of the French Parliaments and of the growth of their political authority will be found in *France under Richelieu and Mazarin*, i. 379–391.

[2] La Bruyère, ii. 61, *De l'homme*.

of soap in the hovels of the poor, was that the rich regarded the peasantry with the same feelings that the planters of the Southern States entertained towards their slaves. The distinction of classes destroyed any community of sentiment. Later in the century, the philosophical literature of the day produced some change in this respect. Interest in the welfare of the lower orders became fashionable. Even then, it was not sufficiently universal or well grounded to be of much service in solving the social problems of France.

The government of Louis XIV. exercised, however, an important influence in preparing France for the increasing prosperity of the eighteenth century. It established order throughout the kingdom; it swept away the last traces of feudal and mediæval lawlessness. The advantages which would naturally have resulted were hindered during the reign of Louis himself by long wars and unwise financial measures. But the work was done. The first requisites for prosperity, freedom from internal commotion and private violence, the unquestioned supremacy of the law, were established in France. After Louis's death the country enjoyed long seasons of peace. Its commercial system became more liberal. The petty shopkeeping of the Middle Ages was succeeded by larger business ventures. France was in a position to reap the full benefit of these changes. The impetus to trade which was given by the enterprises of Law, and which more than counterbalanced the temporary disasters that followed the ruin of his system, the economical theories of the physiocrats, the reforms of Turgot and of his disciples, could have their full effect. From 1715 to 1785, the population of France increased thirty-

three per cent. and its foreign trade five-fold. This great advance was, in no inconsiderable part, due to the fact that the centralized government of Louis XIV. had secured for his subjects and for their posterity the blessings of undisturbed tranquillity and order.

In this reign we can find the beginning of another important social and economical change. When Colbert commenced his ministry, the trade institutions of the Middle Ages were still in force. Almost every branch of industry was in the hands of some corporation, which jealously guarded for its members the exclusive right to exercise it. Admission was obtained by a long apprenticeship; by strict regulations as to the number that might be received, the dangers of excessive competition were sought to be prevented.

These restrictions upon trade undoubtedly increased the price of commodities, and tended to check any large development of industry. Improvements came slowly where competition was restricted. The endeavor of each organization to hold the monopoly of some branch of industry excited constant quarrels as to where one trade began and another stopped. Endless litigation grew out of such questions. For two hundred years the disputes of the bootmakers and the cobblers were before the courts, in order to determine in what condition of dilapidation the shoe escaped the jurisdiction of him who had the right to make, and belonged to him who had the right to repair. The contests between the bakers and the pastry-cooks, the tailors and the menders, were equally involved. It was almost impossible for any new invention to avoid the attacks of those who claimed that by it their privileges would suffer. When Erard commenced the manufacture of the pianos which have become so famous,

the corporation of lutemakers declared that his instruments would deprive them of their vested rights. Only through the influence of the queen was he allowed to proceed.[1]

The sumptuous dinners and the liberal fees, by which the members of many crafts were obliged to celebrate their admission to the privileges of the order, were abuses of less importance. The masterpiece, by which the apprentice must prove his skill, became little more than an opportunity for display. We find the officers of one city charged with the duty of eating a turkey, and deciding whether it was sufficiently well roasted, and garnished, and basted, to justify the admission of the artist into the worshipful company of the cooks.

The endeavors of Colbert to organize great industries, to start manufactories where the work was to be done on the large scale of more modern times, broke into this system of guilds and petty trades. These innovations were carried further in the eighteenth century. During that period, France passed from the industrial systems of the Middle Ages to those which now prevail in all great commercial states. The mediæval guild passed away, to be succeeded by the modern manufacturer. The results of such changes were seen in the progress of invention, the increase in wealth, the growth in production, which characterized the industrial history of France during that century.

It is not so clear that the effect of these changes on the social condition of the body of the workmen was at once beneficial. The development of industry must sooner or later be of advantage to all who labor. The mechanics and artificers of the present day share in

[1] Levasseur, *Classes ouvrières*, ii. 406.

the material benefits which have been obtained for the community. But the apprentice of a mediæval guild, though he went without much that his descendant enjoys, had a somewhat different social position ; his lot was more intimately connected with that of his master ; no apparent conflict of interests drove him to combine with his fellows against his employer. The industrial revolution which began under Colbert, and which has since proceeded further, created the feeling among large bodies of men that a great gulf divided them from their employers. The relations of apprentices towards masters, whose places they might expect to fill, were different from those which exist between a modern employer of labor and his hundreds or thousands of employees. The apprentice, though a servant in his master's family, felt himself a member of it. If he was often scolded when well, he was generally cared for when ill. The employee looks often with sullen envy at the mansion of the great manufacturer, the threshold of which he will never cross, where his name is unknown, and his welfare or adversity are matters of indifference. Whatever may have been the other benefits resulting from such changes, their temporary effect has been to develop social classes, among which the violences of the Revolution and the Commune found eager advocates.

The changes made in legal procedure belong to the beneficial measures of this reign. The reforms which Colbert desired were not wholly carried into effect, but by the code of Louis XIV. important ameliorations were introduced. By it the practice of the law continued to be regulated until it was replaced by the code of Napoleon. To simplify and unify legal systems is always one of the most important duties of

the legislator, and such measures were especially needed in France. Provinces of the written law and of the unwritten law were in equal confusion. It was not until the Revolution that the French enjoyed the blessing of a uniform system of law for the whole land, but the code of Louis effected some improvement in a mass of incoherent mediæval customs and procedure.

Imperfect legal systems breed litigation. The great frequency of lawsuits in France during the seventeenth century attracts our attention. The cost of legal procedure was an item in the expenses of provinces and cities, as well as of individuals, far more important, relatively, than it is at present. The duration of lawsuits is an evil now, but it was a more serious evil then. There was little exaggeration in saying, that to be a litigant was to have an occupation; that a lawsuit begun in youth endured till age, and was left to posterity.[1] The volume of business in France two hundred years ago was vastly less than it is now, but there were more lawsuits. Colbert sighed for some means by which to lessen the ruinous amount of litigation, and his desire for reformation in this respect has been gratified. Some improvement can be seen in the eighteenth century. Chalon sur Saone was probably a fair type of other French towns. In 1655 there were fifty-two advocates in that city, and in 1787 there were but thirty-one.[2]

The French judges no longer occupy the position which they held under the old régime. The loss of the political authority which the courts once sought to exercise to some extent accounts for this change; but

[1] Montesquieu, "C'est un état que d'être plaideur," etc.

[2] Statistics given by Babeau, *La vie rurale.*

the fact that litigation absorbs a smaller proportion of the time and wealth of the community has tended to diminish the importance of lawyers as a class. It is not unlikely that such may be the result of the development of civilization in all countries.

The system of government which reached its highest development under Louis XIV. was at the same time nearing its end. During seventy years, he and his ministers labored to render the power of the monarch unrestrained, and a little over seventy years later the monarchy ceased to exist. The system proved unfitted for the needs of the eighteenth century. Yet the absolute power of Louis XIV. was far from being the capricious despotism of a Sultan of Turkey; though in no constitution was found a definite limit, beyond which the sovereign could not exercise his will, he was restrained by institutions which, although weakened, could not be entirely disregarded, by customs and traditions which controlled the French king, as the unwritten principles of the constitution are respected by the English Parliament. However absolutely the uncontrolled power of the king was proclaimed, it was held in check by the innumerable usages and traditions of a highly civilized society.

That such a form of government was the best for the nation as well as for the sovereign, Louis XIV. believed as implicitly as any man can believe in any institution, human or divine. His faith in the absolute power of the king was as enthusiastic as the faith of Harmodius and Aristogeiton in the liberty of the people. "Kings," he wrote, "are absolute lords, and have by nature the full and free disposition of the property of all, alike that of the church and of the laity. . . . Nothing establishes so surely the happi-

ness and welfare of the country as the perfect union of all authority in the person of the sovereign. The least division works great evils. . . . The prince cannot allow his authority to be shared by others, without making himself responsible for the infinite disorders which ensue. . . . To receive the law from his people is the worst calamity that can befall one of our rank. The will of God is that he who is born a subject should obey and make no question." [1]

Such was the theory of the master, and such was also the belief of his subjects. The bodies which still possessed any independent power naturally sought to preserve it, but the nation as a whole was content with the administration of Louis XIV. The misfortunes of his later years caused some grumbling, but a desire that the nation should take a more active part in its own government hardly found articulate utterance. The people did not enjoy political freedom, and they felt no regret at the deprivation. The French boasted of their loyalty to their sovereign, and viewed with horror rebellion and regicide among the English. At the close of Louis's reign, one might well have thought that the system of government which he had perfected was destined to a long duration. Certainly, there was little to indicate the rapid change in sentiments and beliefs of the next seventy years.

Yet the monarch had unwittingly done much to excite this intellectual revolution. The difference in religious sentiment is one of the marked distinctions between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries in France. The seventeenth century was an age of faith. Great preachers flourished. New religious orders were organized. The older orders of the church

[1] *Œuvres de Louis XIV.*, t. i. 59 *et passim.*

developed new life and new activity. The Jesuits, the Jansenists, the members of the Oratory, the preachers of the Mission, the disciples of the Port Royal, all worked for the cause of Christianity. The charities of St. Vincent de Paul and the austerities of La Trappe were alike manifestations of a sense of religious responsibility.

Such an era, characterized by a broad-minded charity and by an active zeal in good works, was followed within a century by a great increase of infidelity. This result was largely due to the measures of Louis XIV. and of his religious advisers in the latter part of his reign. Bigotry and persecution became the recognized manifestations of Christian zeal. An epoch of self-sacrifice, of pity for man's physical woes and zeal for his spiritual enlightenment, was succeeded by one where the narrowest conception of religion was extolled, and the slightest deviation from it was punished.

The Huguenots, who were an important element in French religious life, were obliged either to leave France, or to live in a condition of half-disguised hypocrisy. The vigorous intellects of the Jansenists were exposed to a long persecution, from which their pure morals did not save them. By the endeavors to compel an acceptance of the bull Unigenitus, Louis and Le Tellier left behind them a heritage of strife. The king was little versed in such questions, and his zeal was measured by his ignorance. His writings show the nervous apprehension of Jansenism which his Jesuit confessors had instilled into him. The Duke of Orleans claimed that when he wished to take an officer with him to Spain, the king at once protested and declared that the man was a Jansenist.

"He cannot be that," rejoined the duke, "for he does not believe in a God at all." "That I did not know," said the monarch, and no further objection was made.[1] Even if the incident was colored by the malice of Orleans, the king's ignorance and bigotry in religious matters do not require anecdotes to illustrate them.

The devotional zeal which was assumed by the courtiers, during the latter years of the reign, was in many cases only a cloak by which to advance their interests, or to avoid the royal disapproval. Alike the king, Mme. de Maintenon, and the Duke of Burgundy favored the employment of those who made loud professions of religious zeal. They sowed formalism to reap hypocrisy. The bigotry and the persecutions of Louis XIV. were succeeded by the license and the infidelity of the regency; they prepared the way for the revolt against religious belief which characterized the eighteenth century in France. Vincent de Paul and St. Cyran had been succeeded by Bossuet and Pascal; La Chaise and Le Tellier were followed by Voltaire and Diderot.

The age of Louis XIV. already seems remote, and we imagine it to be free from many of the grievances of the nineteenth century. The study of the past shows the existence of most of the evils which are deemed peculiar to the present. The stately halls of Versailles, the life of Paris when Racine wrote and Bourdaloue preached, seem removed from the vulgar ills of the present. But the same complaints were raised, and with as much foundation. The desire for gain was quite as strong. Money, it was said, made all equal. The valet, who had jobbed in government contracts with good fortune, chatted familiarly with

[1] Related by the Duke of Orleans to St. Simon.

the duke, and found all doors open to the parvenu who was sufficiently rich.[1] The poor no longer showed a respectful courtesy to those of rank, but were sullen and bold.[2] Children had forgotten the reverence due their parents; a good servant was a treasure that could rarely be found.[3] The social evils which we believe to be new are usually very old. We may reflect with gratitude, that for many of the blessings which we now enjoy, one would search in vain in the age of Louis XIV.; that thought is freer and education more general, labor is better paid and comfort more widespread, than when the great monarch took his daily walk in the gardens of Versailles.

[1] *Souvenirs sérieux et comiques*, 1708, pp. 178, 179.
[2] *Lettres d'un Sicilien.*
[3] Cited in Babeau, *Les artisans d'autrefois.*

CHAPTER X.

THE REGENCY.

1715.

THE monarchical feeling was strong among the French, but it extended only to living sovereigns. It was the personal embodiment of royalty for which the people entertained respect and affection. No nation showed less regard for its rulers when the breath was out of their bodies. To this Louis XIV. was no exception. His death excited no regret among his subjects, and his obsequies received no attention. The heart of the monarch was deposited with the Jesuits, who claimed its custody in death, as they had possessed it in life. Not half a dozen of all his court were sufficiently interested to attend the ceremony. When his remains were taken to their resting-place at St. Denis, they received scanty marks of respect. Where the funeral cortége was not the object of insult, the people viewed it with indifference. Louis's death was the signal for the appearance of numerous satirical verses, which were bitter beyond precedent.[1] "Our eyes were too full of tears during his life to have any left for his death," said one, while another

[1] The heart of the king was given to the Jesuits, and his entrails were buried at Notre Dame.

> "A St. Denis, comme à Versailles,
> Il est sans cœur et sans entrailles,"

wrote one libelist.

declared that, however cruel and heartless the king had been in his lifetime, he had imitated the Messiah in dying for the good of the world. Thirty funeral orations preserved at the National Library, all of which describe with eloquence the virtues and achievements of Louis the Great, do not offset these lampoons as indications of popular feeling.

When so little respect was paid to the obsequies of the king, it was unlikely that his last wishes should be regarded. Louis XIV. left a will, solemnly deposited in the custody of the Parliament, by which he sought to regulate the government during the minority of his successor. There were many reasons which led him to regard this period with special solicitude. Louis XV. was but five years of age when he succeeded to the throne of an old man of seventy-seven. His minority would continue for eight years, and, though upon completing his thirteenth year a king of France was by law supposed to assume the control of the state, it was impossible that he should become his own master at so immature an age. The disturbances in which France had been involved during the minority of Louis XIV. suggested the possibilities which might be in store for his successor. Even if the altered condition of the country rendered unlikely any recurrence of the troubles of the Fronde, Louis was desirous of the continuance of the policy and the principles which he had adopted.

The person who was entitled to the office of regent during the minority that was soon to begin did not enjoy the confidence of the king, and was an object of aversion to almost all of those by whom the monarch was surrounded. The Duke of Orleans was nephew of Louis XIV., and by virtue of the provisions of the

treaty of Utrecht he now stood next to the dauphin in the line of succession. The mother of Louis XV. was dead, and the position of regent belonged to his nearest male relative. No edict or statute so declared, but such was deemed to be the well-established political tradition. It rested, indeed, on scanty precedent. There had been three minorities during the last two hundred years, but in each case the regency had been intrusted to the mother of the king. It was necessary to go back to the period of the English wars to find this authority claimed as a matter of right by the first prince of the blood. But the growth of strict monarchical theories, by which the throne was held to descend in the royal family according to the rules of primogeniture, and in conformance with divine law, seemed by analogy to secure the control of the state during a minority to the prince next in succession. Louis XIV. was the last man to seek to interfere with such principles, even if the rights secured by them devolved upon a person whom he did not regard with favor.

The nearest relative of Louis XV. was his uncle, Philip V. of Spain. Had Philip remained Duke of Anjou, his right to the regency would have been beyond question. His grandfather regarded him with tender affection, and his desire for an intimate union between the French and Spanish peoples would have been gratified if their policy for a number of years could have been directed by the same person. But the allies during the late war, in order to guard against the possible union of the two thrones, had insisted that Philip should renounce all his rights as a French prince. This had been one of the conditions of the peace of Utrecht, and had been embodied in

the provisions of that treaty. It was with reluctance that Louis consented to this sacrifice, but he had agreed to it, and he had compelled his grandson to execute the renunciation with all the required formalities. Though Philip had not dared to disobey his grandfather's commands, he was as faithless to this engagement as he was to all engagements. In duplicity, Philip V. was as far the superior of Louis XIV. as he was his inferior in every kingly quality. Indeed, the extent of falseness of which he was capable is surprising, when we consider how limited was his intelligence.

The ink was hardly dry upon the treaty which secured Philip his crown, when he endeavored to induce his grandfather to violate its conditions. The Spanish ambassador at Paris was instructed that, as the renunciations had not been freely executed, his Catholic Majesty felt that it was perfectly proper to disregard them.[1] In conformity with these directions, the Cardinal del Judice labored with Torcy, the French foreign minister, to have Philip named by Louis as regent of France during the minority which, in all probability, would soon begin. Torcy, apparently, was not averse to such a step, but it met with an insurmountable obstacle in Louis XIV.'s resolution to keep faith with the allies, and to save his country from the possibility of another war. In this, as in all he did in reference to the peace of Utrecht, Louis acted with firmness, with wisdom, and with the utmost good faith. The choice of Philip as regent of France would have excited the apprehensions which had been

[1] Grimaldo to Judice, May 23, 1714. I owe the letters now contained in the Spanish archives to the learned and able work of M. Baudrillart, *Philippe V. et la Cour de France.*

allayed by his renunciation, and would probably have again arrayed England, Holland, and Austria in arms against France. The Spanish minister was informed that Louis was resolved to observe the terms of the treaty, to preserve peace, and to avoid any pretext for a rupture.[1]

While the king felt that his plighted faith and the welfare of his people excluded Philip from the regency, and that the Duke of Orleans was therefore entitled to it by right of birth, he desired so to restrict his authority that the policy of the state should remain unchanged. Orleans's character and career were such as to justify, to some extent, the distrust with which he was regarded by his uncle. Philip, Duke of Orleans, was now forty years of age. His father, the younger brother of Louis XIV., had been a man devoid of capacity and destitute of ambition; effeminate in appearance and character; whose existence was a nullity, except as it was varied by weak and despicable vices. The duke's mother was a German princess by birth, and she always remained German at heart. Fifty years of life in France did not acclimate her to the atmosphere of Versailles. She had an acute mind, good morals, bad manners, and a vulgar tongue. Her only son, the future regent, was even further removed in thought and demeanor from the stately graces, the decorous conduct, the conservative views, of those by whom Louis XIV. was surrounded. In intelligence, in mental vigor, he was an extraordinary man, but he lacked the power of concentrating his abilities upon a

[1] Judice to Philip, July 3, 1714; Torcy to Ursins, July 2, 1714; Louis to Philip, August 23, 1714; Louis to Iberville, August 22, 1714. "I shall not make the least change in the solemn renunciation of my grandson."

serious purpose. His mother said that he had every talent except that of making his talents of use. He was a good musician and composed some pretty operas; he painted well; he was a competent officer; he was a good speaker; there were few branches of learning with which he had not at least a superficial acquaintance. His tastes led him to one class of studies, which had much to do with the evil reputation from which he suffered during life. He had a fondness for chemistry, and amused himself by indulging in the experiments which still allured the students of that science. It was said that the duke and a craftsman of great repute were engaged in endeavors to make gold; that he had a glass of some liquor in which he could see future events; that he and his assistants often labored day and night in the great laboratory which he had built, occupied in repeated, though unsuccessful attempts to evoke the Devil, and to get on speaking terms with him.[1] This was very harmless trifling, but it was enough to excite suspicion in a community where many still cherished a lingering belief in magic potions and black arts, and similar nonsense.

Orleans was early married to his cousin, one of the illegitimate daughters of Louis XIV. She had little to make her attractive, and the marriage was contracted merely to gratify the wishes of the king. The young duke may have consented to the alliance from a politic desire to gain favor with the monarch, but his subsequent conduct rendered the sacrifice of no avail. He plunged into dissipation of every kind, and he had the weakness, not uncommon with young men, of wishing to be thought more wicked than he was. "My nephew is a braggadocio of vice," said Louis

[1] *Mém. de St. Simon*, iv. 459, 462; ix. 262 *et pas.*

XIV. He was bad enough, without any need of bragging: he drank too much; he had numerous mistresses and many illegitimate children; he was loud-spoken in his professions of infidelity. He cherished a hopeless admiration for the grand prior of France, who during forty years had never been to bed sober.[1] He felt for him, says St. Simon, the veneration that a bishop has for a father of the church.

Such conduct was distasteful to the king, and was little relished by the community. In 1712, the Duke of Burgundy, his wife, and his infant son died suddenly within a few days of each other. Appalled by such a series of calamities, the public insisted that they were due to foul play, and the voice of calumny at once declared the Duke of Orleans to be the guilty man. He had been using his secret arts, his poisonous drugs, his noxious philters, to clear the way for himself to the throne; he was already near it, and a few more murders would make him king of France. He was hooted at in the streets when he attended the funeral of the dauphin. "See the murderer!" was heard from every side.

There was not an iota of evidence to sustain these charges. No one now doubts that the Duke of Burgundy and his son died from natural causes. Orleans was a profligate, but he was as incapable of gaining a throne by murder as Fénelon or D'Aguesseau. He was not a man of violent ambition, and while his character was weak, it was not criminal. He had no affinity with a Richard III. If he had really been the bloodthirsty fiend that he was declared to be, he would not have stayed his hand when only the life of Louis XV. was between him and the throne, and when his position as regent made it easy to remove the last obstacle from the way.

[1] *Mém. de St. Simon*, xi. 178.

With his usual good judgment, Louis XIV. at once recognized the lack of any foundation for these atrocious calumnies, and he gave them no credence. But a lack of proof rarely interferes with the greedy acceptance of such scandals by the multitude. A goodly proportion of the Parisian public believed that Orleans had murdered the young princes. Whenever Louis XV. was sick during the regency, many at once began to shake their heads, and to say that the regent was again at work with his philters ; the name of poisoner always appeared in the libels with which he was attacked.[1]

The courtiers at Versailles for the most part adopted the opinion of the Paris bourgeoisie. Even those who did not believe the charges avoided any intercourse with one who was under the ban of public disapproval. He was shunned in the royal salon ; if he approached a group of courtiers, one after another slipped away, until he found himself alone.[2]

It illustrates Louis XIV.'s tenacity in following what he believed to be his duty that neither the calumnies with which the Duke of Orleans was assailed, nor the hatred felt towards him by those nearest the king, nor the distrust of his character and his purposes entertained by the monarch himself, induced him to nominate any one else as regent. He regarded that office as due to Orleans by virtue of his birth and

[1] When the young Louis XV. was taken to Versailles, in 1722, one man was put in the Bastille for saying that they would take the king to Versailles and from there to St. Denis. "He will never return," said many of the spectators of his departure. — *Journal de Marais*, ii. 288, 298. The Duke of Burgundy and his oldest son had died at Versailles. "The regent wishes to preserve the unity of place," wrote one chronicler when Louis XV. was taken there.

[2] *Mém. de St. Simon*, ix. 272.

as a result of the provisions of the treaty of Utrecht, and nothing could lead him to deprive his nephew of his rights. On the other hand, an endeavor to restrict the authority of a man whom he mistrusted was natural, and was not reprehensible. He might well have doubted whether the effort would be successful. His father, Louis XIII., had endeavored to limit the power of his wife as regent of the kingdom. The provisions of his will had been contemptuously swept away. Three quarters of a century had passed since then; the authority of a live king had increased, but it was soon shown that the wishes of a dead king were no more respected than in the past. This disregard illustrated the difference between France and Spain. The French reverenced monarchy, but their reverence ceased at the tomb. However potent a king was at Versailles, he was only dust and ashes at St. Denis. But in Spain, when even the imbecile Charles II. named a successor by his will, his choice was respected by the nation; the Spanish sovereigns could rule spirits from their urns.

At all events, Louis attempted to exercise after his death the authority which had been so absolute during his life. By his will, executed in August, 1714, a council of regency was appointed, which was vested with the decision of all questions of importance during the minority of Louis XV. In this council Orleans had but one vote. The sentiments of the members named by the will were well known, and they could be relied on to continue the policy of their late master. In another respect the authority of the future regent was curtailed. The Duke of Maine was charged with the education of the young Louis XV., and he was given the command of the military forces

attached to the person of the king.[1] This choice was dictated as much, perhaps, by affection for Maine as by distrust of Orleans. Of all the children of Louis XIV., the Duke of Maine was most dear to his father. He was regarded with equal affection by Mme. de Maintenon. She had been his governess, and she labored for his advancement with all the zeal which she could have shown for a son of her own. Honors of every sort were lavished upon this favorite child. He had received the rank of a prince of the blood; he had been declared capable of inheriting the throne on the failure of legitimate heirs; he was now given a position which was hardly inferior to that of the regent.

On Louis's deathbed, he assured the Duke of Orleans that there was nothing in his will which interfered with the rights secured to him by his birth. In saying this, he was undoubtedly sincere. He had not endeavored to deprive his nephew of the office of regent; the restrictions which he had imposed he perhaps hoped would be cheerfully accepted. Notwithstanding the secrecy with which the provisions of the will had been surrounded, their general nature became known to Orleans. The future regent resolved that he would exercise the full authority of the office, and he made his plans to sweep away all the restrictions that had been devised. He was not a man greedy for power, but he was persistent in the pursuit of what he regarded as his just rights. Those whom Louis had chosen for the council of regency had little sympathy

[1] The will and codicils are found in Dumont, *Corps Dip.*, viii. 434 *et seq.* In the will Louis did not appoint Orleans regent. He was regarded as succeeding to that office by virtue of his birth.

with the regent; the Duke of Maine, who was vested with a great authority, was his personal enemy. Orleans felt that with his power thus curtailed, he would be no more than a figurehead. His position in the community had improved during the three years which had elapsed since the death of the Duke of Burgundy. The accusations then heaped upon him were no longer repeated, even if they were not forgotten. For some time it had been certain that he would be regent during the minority of Louis XV., and ambitious men began to treat him with deference. Many of those who were closely allied with the court of the old king were induced by visions of future favor to promise their assistance to the new ruler. Some of his friends advised him to summon the States General, and to ask from the representatives of the nation at large the untrammeled authority which he claimed as his right. The more prudent feared to convene a body which had not met for a century, and which, once in session, might prove a new and dangerous factor in politics.

If precedent were to be regarded, the authority to designate a regent, and to annul the will of a king, rested in the Parliament of Paris. When Henry IV. was murdered, the Parliament met and declared Mary de Medici regent. When Louis XIII. died, the Parliament set aside the provisions of his will, and declared the regency to be vested in Anne of Austria, free from the restrictions which her husband had sought to impose. It was anomalous that such a power should be vested in a judicial body, but it had been claimed, it had been exercised, and it had been respected. It could even be urged that Louis XIV. had himself recognized this right of the Parliament, for his will had been solemnly confided to its custody.

Orleans resolved, therefore, that he would demand from the Parliament of Paris the abrogation of any provisions by which his power as regent was restricted. Various endeavors were made to obtain the good-will of influential members, but the most alluring bribe was the assurance that the court should again be vested with the political authority which it had been the constant effort of Louis XIV. to destroy. It was easy to induce judges to disregard the last commands of a master who had repressed their independence, and had overthrown their most cherished privileges.

At seven in the morning of September 2, the day succeeding Louis's death, the Parliament met to hear the reading of his will, and to consider the question of the regency. The spectacle presented by the body thus solemnly convened was an imposing one. There were present the members of the various courts composing the Parliament of Paris, a tribunal which in dignity and importance was excelled by no other, and which was equaled only by the English House of Lords. They sat together, arrayed in the stately scarlet robes which marked their dignity. On the higher rows of seats, reserved for those of the most elevated rank, were the princes of the blood, the peers of France, the marshals of the kingdom. There could be seen the representatives of many of the great names of French history, — Condés and Sullys, Rochefoucaulds and Luxembourgs. Among those assembled were the Marshal of Villars and the Marshal of Berwick, the greatest of French soldiers; D'Aguesseau, the greatest of French jurists; and Harcourt, the most famous of French diplomats. The Duke of Maine, the favorite son of the late king, was present, exultant in the authority secured to him by the will,

whose contents were soon to be made known. The Duke of Orleans was also present, confident in his own address and in the promises of support which he had obtained. The results of the session were watched with interest by a great body of spectators. From a retired seat the English ambassador witnessed the procedure of a body which resembled the English Parliament in name, but differed widely from it in constitution.

The proceedings began with one of the customary disputes over a question of etiquette. When this was quieted, the Duke of Orleans addressed the body and claimed for himself, by virtue of his birth, the inalienable right to act as regent of the realm, untrammeled by restrictions. Anticipating the restraints that might have been imposed by the will, he declared that the late king had told him that if any of its provisions were found to be injudicious, they could be changed as should seem expedient. There was some question of declaring Orleans regent forthwith, without even listening to the instrument by which Louis XIV. sought to provide for the government of his kingdom. At last, however, the will was solemnly brought from its resting-place. An official proceeded to read its lengthy provisions, which the king had laboriously prepared in his own handwriting.[1] They were listened to with indifference. When the reading was completed, Orleans again addressed the court. The restrictions of the will he brushed lightly away. He was willing to be restrained from doing evil, he said, but he must be free to do good.

[1] "Sept ou huit pages de la propre main du roi et assez mal écrites," says an advocate of the Parliament, who doubtless examined the will.—*Journal de Marais*, September 2, 1715.

As proofs of such a desire, he announced his resolution to replace the despotic power of the secretaries of state by various councils, — a plan which he judiciously attributed to the Duke of Burgundy, whose memory was dear to all. What was yet more to the purpose, he stated his intention to restore to the Parliament its ancient right of remonstrance when royal edicts were presented for registration. This announcement was received with applause. None of its judicial functions were so dear to the Parliament as the right to remonstrate with the king concerning the laws which he sent to his courts to be registered and enforced. It was a right which they had long possessed, which they had always sought to extend, and of which for almost half a century they had been deprived.[1]

The Duke of Orleans was declared by acclamation regent of the kingdom, and vested with all authority pertaining to that office. For the time that Louis XV. remained a minor, Orleans was in fact the king of France. The authority of a regent was the authority of a sovereign. The Duke of Maine made an ineffectual effort to retain some of the functions with which he was intrusted by the will. But he was a man of inferior intelligence, he spoke poorly, and his influence had departed with the death of his father. The universal sentiment was in favor of Orleans, and whatever he proposed was adopted. He was authorized to choose the members of the council of regency.

[1] By Louis XIV. the courts were commanded to register an edict when presented, without discussion. After registration they were at liberty to send remonstrances, if they saw fit, but to discuss a law that had gone into effect was an idle ceremony. — *Déclaration*, February 24, 1673, etc.

All the restrictions contained in the will of the late king were annulled.[1]

Thus the Duke of Orleans became ruler of the kingdom, with an authority as untrammeled as that of Louis XIV. Philip V. of Spain had instructed his minister to protest against any act which deprived him of his right to act as regent.[2] He even contemplated levying troops, with which to approach the boundaries of France and enforce his claims.[3] Nothing was done. Philip was always presumptuous in his plans, and impotent in their execution.

The new regent proceeded to make changes in the administrative system of government, from which much was hoped, but which proved to be so ineffectual that they were soon abandoned. In conformity with his promises, he organized numerous councils, to which were confided the finances, the army, the navy, and the other great departments of affairs.[4] As he truly said, this had been one of the projects favored by the Duke of Burgundy. It had been devised by some of those in Burgundy's confidence, and by this change they hoped to abrogate the great authority which had been exercised by ministers like Colbert and Louvois.

[1] The MS. report of the proceedings of this session of the Parliament is in the Bib. Nat. It has also been printed. An accurate account of the session is given in the journal of Marais. It is also reported in great detail by the president D'Aligre, and by the Duke of St. Simon. The proceedings occupied the day, the regent spoke several times, and separate votes were taken on various propositions. I have given the substance of his speeches and the result of the session. The detail is not important.

[2] Pouvoir à Cellamare, May 9, 1715.

[3] St. Aignan to Torcy, August 12, 1715.

[4] *Déclaration*, September 15, 1715.

The position of a secretary of state had become one of large influence and importance. The ministers who controlled the finances, the army, the navy, or the foreign relations of the kingdom exercised a great power, received a great deal of adulation, and usually acquired a great deal of money. These positions were intrusted, with rare exceptions, to men sprung from the middle classes, partly because such was the royal tradition, and partly because they were the only persons fit for the work. Offices of such dignity, when held by men who were regarded as upstarts, excited the jealousy of the aristocracy. To a considerable extent, those of the highest social rank were content to be political nullities, but this abnegation was not universal. An aristocratic revival had been regarded as the salvation of the country by the counsellors of the Duke of Burgundy. The peers of France, whose chief functions were to act as ornamental accessories at a coronation or a bed of justice, dreamed of a restoration of the somewhat misty authority which had been exercised by their predecessors in the days of a feudal monarchy. Those of noble birth were discontented because most of the positions of responsibility, and many of those of profit, were filled by persons of low birth; because secretaries of state, judges, superintendents, and financiers, almost without exception, were commoners.

It was therefore resolved to vest the authority formerly exercised by the secretaries of state in councils, and to choose the majority of the members from those illustrious by birth. This plan possessed the advantage that it created a large number of new places which the regent could give away. He gained the help of many of those whose aid he sought by promising them a seat in some of the various councils.

As an attempt at political reformation, it was short-lived. It was subject to the fatal objection that it would not work. This was partly because a council consisting of a number of men is always unfit for executive work, and is usually unfit for any work, and partly because most of the members of these councils were incapable of doing anything under any circumstances. The evils which had resulted from vesting an excessive authority in one man were far exceeded by those which resulted from dividing it among a dozen men. These political councils resembled an ordinary council of war: the members met, they discussed, they doubted, and they adjourned. The ineffectiveness which is inherent in such bodies was increased by the character of the members. Some of them were taken from the Parliament, or were men who had experience in practical affairs. But the majority were chosen from among the great nobles of the state. For the most part they were unwilling to give the labor which was required to perform their duties, and when they had sufficient industry they did not have sufficient intelligence. All the habits of their life, all the traditions of their order, unfitted them for practical work. They would not condescend to questions of detail, and attention to detail was required in order to understand matters of importance. There were exceptions to this inefficiency, but as it was the natural result of training and education, the exceptions were few.

The Duke of St. Simon had been steadfast to the Duke of Orleans in good fortune and in evil fortune. As a reward, he possessed a considerable influence with the regent at the beginning of his administration. He was one of the most zealous for a renewal

of the lost influence of the aristocracy; he devised the system of councils; he foresaw the monarchy tottering to its fall, unless it rested for its main support on the peers of the realm. He was in many respects a favorable specimen of his order. His character was beyond reproach; he was not greedy for money; he was faithful to his marital relations. Yet a man more useless in the conduct of affairs could not have been found in the kingdom. He admitted his incapacity, and he gloried in it. He was offered the chief position in the council of finance. He declined it, and with good reason. Commerce, circulation, exchange, he said, were known to him hardly by name; he had never mastered even the first rules of arithmetic; he had never taken charge of his private estate, because he knew that he was incapable. If he had charge of the finances, though he might not steal himself, his incapacity and his ignorance would allow others to play riot in the treasury.[1] This was entirely true, and the intellectual condition of this duke was the normal condition of most dukes. Certainly it was the privilege of a gentleman to be ignorant, and contempt for the affairs of common people naturally resulted in a lack of familiarity with the affairs of ordinary life. The mistake was in a desire to fill positions for which they were unwilling to fit themselves. It was difficult to choose a good minister of finance from those who regarded it as beneath them to know the rules of arithmetic.

While many of those who found seats in the councils were indifferent to such matters as the laws of trade, the soundness of the currency, or the condition of agriculture, they were intensely interested in ques-

[1] *Mém. de St. Simon*, xi. 267, 268.

tions of etiquette and precedence. Such controversies in French history took the place of struggles over ship money and habeas corpus acts in the history of England. A contest had long waged between the dukes and the Parliament. It might not seem important, for the only question was whether a duke or a president should first take off his hat. But if it appears to be a trivial matter, it was not so regarded. Orleans had obtained the support of many of the dukes by promising to make a decision in their favor. The judges were as tenacious of their pretensions as the dukes, and Orleans was loath to offend them. He made no decision, and the dispute waged for years with great virulence.[1]

Another controversy of a similar character resulted in the entire disorganization of the council of regency. Cardinal Rohan was appointed a member, to prepare the way for the entry of Cardinal Dubois. He took the precedence claimed by cardinals, and seated himself next to the princes of the blood. The regent sustained him in his action. Thereupon the marshals and dukes, fifteen in number, of whom the cardinal had taken a precedence which they denied him, refused to attend the council. The right or the wrong of the matter was uncertain then, and few would deem it worth while to investigate it now. But it is curious to reflect that a body charged with the most important political duties should practically have dissolved, on a controversy as to the order in which the members

[1] Volumes of the *Mémoires de St. Simon* are filled with discussions of the question of the hat, and of the other squabbles about ceremonial. Less lengthy discussions can be found in many other contemporary memoirs, also in the *Registres du Parliament* and *Registres du Conseil de la Régence*, MSS. Bib. Nat.

should sit around the council board; it perished, not on a question of state, but on a question of chairs.[1]

Another dispute, while similar in some of its phases, deserves greater attention, because it illustrates the conception then held of the monarchical office. The favors which Louis XIV. had heaped upon his illegitimate children were regarded with disapproval. He had given to the Duke of Maine and the Count of Toulouse, his sons by Mme. de Montespan, precedence next to the legitimate princes of the blood royal. This was exceedingly offensive to the nobles whom they were thus enabled to precede, but the number of those who were affected was not large. Another measure, upon which Louis decided, was far more serious in its nature. By an edict issued in 1714, the princes were declared competent to succeed to the throne of France on the failure of legitimate heirs.[2] It is true that such a failure was not probable, but it was by no means impossible. If Philip of Spain was barred by his renunciation, the male members of the families of Orleans and Condé were the only heirs after Louis XV., and he was a sickly child of five. The line of Bourbon kings might become extinct, as the line of Valois kings had become extinct.

In what manner was the divine right to the throne transmitted? Was it not restricted by the laws of God as well as man to those born in lawful matrimony? Could a sovereign confer this right upon his illegitimate offspring? If he could choose his bastard children as successors to the throne when legitimate

[1] It should be said that the council of regency was in a condition of decrepitude when the marshals and dukes seceded. Their action left it still more shorn of authority.

[2] Edict of July, 1714.

heirs failed, could he not choose any one else whom his affection or his caprice might suggest? If the royal line failed, did not the right to select its own sovereign revert to the nation?

Such questions were not allowed to be discussed while Louis XIV. lived, but after his death they were hotly debated. The friends of the Duke of Maine could find in the early history of Gaul and France abundant instances where the rights possessed by a sovereign had passed to children who, by no device of casuistry, could be regarded as begotten in lawful matrimony. His opponents replied that precedents found in those unsettled times, when half barbarous kings changed their wives almost as often as they changed their shirts, had no application to a community that was civilized and Christianized. Upon the institution of marriage, ordained by God, consecrated by the church, society was based. The rights of the sovereign were great, but how could it be claimed that he had the power to regulate the succession in a manner contrary to the traditions of the state and the laws of God? Was he the absolute proprietor of the kingdom, of which he could dispose at his will? If he could declare a bastard his heir, why not a daughter or a stranger? At all events, if the sovereign could bestow this right, the sovereign could take it away. It was not that divine right to rule a nation, with which neither king nor people could interfere.[1]

[1] All these arguments, and an infinite number beside, can be found in the innumerable contemporary pamphlets in which these questions were discussed. See pamphlets contained in MSS., *Journal de la Régence*, also *Requête des Princes du sang, Mém. de Monsieur le Duc du Maine, Maxime de droit et d'état, Lettres d'un Espagnol à un Français, Justifications de la naissance légitime de Bernard, petit fils de Charlemagne*, etc., etc.

Those who spoke in the name of the infant Louis XV. were hostile to the Duke of Maine; they were resolved that he should be shorn of the enormous advantages which he owed to the weakness of Louis XIV. and to the intrigues of Mme. de Maintenon. In 1717, an edict in the name of Louis XV. deprived the Duke of Maine and his brother of the right of succession to the throne, which had been bestowed on them by Louis XIV., and declared that, if the legitimate line failed, it would be for the nation to repair this misfortune by the wisdom of its choice.[1]

This measure was followed by a degradation in rank, which was accorded to the clamor of the dukes. The Duke of Maine was deprived of the precedence over those of an earlier creation which had been granted him by his father. A regulation of this character would be unworthy of mention, were it not for the importance attached to it at the time. With this was presented an ordinance seriously curtailing the power of the Parliament. The one measure sought to do away with the check which an ancient and important body could exercise upon the caprice or the tyranny of the crown; the other regulated the order in which a few great nobles should be placed during solemn ceremonies, who should have the highest seat at the council, who should first make his bow to the sovereign. The regent, in his remarks to the members of the council of regency, referred to the edict which regulated the precedence of the Duke of Maine as by far the more important of the two.[2] Certainly it was

[1] Edict of July, 1717; *Anc. lois françaises*, xxi. 144.

[2] *Mém. de St. Simon*, xvi. 20. St. Simon occupies sixty pages in describing the declaration and registration of these edicts. The question of the Duke of Maine's precedence was to him the great question of his life.

so regarded by his auditors. One of the dukes has described the overpowering emotions with which he heard read the announcement that he was elevated one place in the order of the peerage; he tells us that never before nor since had he experienced such ecstasy of bliss as on that sweet day.

The attention of the regent was not entirely absorbed by wrangles of this nature. He began his administration with a series of liberal measures which were in accordance with his own character. If he did not persevere in all of them, it was by reason of the indolence of his nature, and the incredible facility with which he allowed himself to be influenced by others.

A large number of prisoners were held in confinement under *lettres de cachet*, in other words, by virtue of an arbitrary order, without any formal charge. The most of those who had been thus imprisoned during the last years of Louis XIV.'s reign were suspected of no crime except that of entertaining erroneous views as to the infallibility of the Pope and the virtues of the Jesuits. Their offenses were tendencies towards Jansenism, and refusals to accept the bull Unigenitus. The Jesuits had used their favor without scruple; as the mind of the king became enfeebled by age, it was easy to obtain an order for the arrest of any one who gave offense to those who controlled his conscience and his religious policy. A crime against the church was a crime against the state, and the prisons were filled with religious offenders.

Orleans ordered the release of all those who had been confined on such charges; he celebrated his assumption of power by a humane and liberal jail

delivery. Among the cases investigated were discovered the instances of hardship which were sure to occur when arbitrary arrests were allowed, and when there was no legal process to question the grounds on which men were held in custody. Persons were arrested on suspicion, and remained in confinement until their cases were forgotten. Amongst those released from the Bastille was a man who had been incarcerated thirty-five years before, on the day of his arrival from Italy. He did not know why he was arrested, and no one else could tell why. He had never been examined, he had never been presented with any charges. Those who had ordered his arrest were dead. Those who now sought to investigate the grounds of it decided that it had probably been made from some mistake. The prisoner declined to accept the liberty which was at last offered him. In Paris, he said, he had no acquaintances; his relatives in Italy were dead; his property had been divided among heirs who had long supposed him to be dead. He asked that the government, which had kept him a prisoner for the most of his life, should take charge of him till his death. His request was granted. He was allowed such liberty in the Bastille as he desired, and there he remained.[1]

The regent showed the liberality of his views on religious questions by other measures. As members of the council of religion, he selected the Cardinal of Noailles, and D'Aguesseau, who was soon afterwards made Chancellor of France. D'Aguesseau was already renowned for learning and integrity, when he was promoted to the highest judicial office in the kingdom. His fame rests, perhaps, rather on his qualities

[1] *Archives de la Bastille*, xii., xiii.; *Mém. de St. Simon*, xii. 220.

as a jurist than as a judge. In him, elevation of character was not accompanied by decision of character. He was accused, as Lord Eldon was accused, of a chronic incapacity to make up his mind. In both cases, the extent of their learning was injurious to their administration of justice. It is not a common malady, but when combined with a timid and an irresolute mind, it may prove a serious one.[1]

The choice of such men for the council of religion showed that the virulent persecution of the Jansenists was at an end for the present. In other ways the regent manifested his disapproval of the Jesuits. More than any other man, Le Tellier had been responsible for the narrow religious policy of the latter part of Louis XIV.'s reign. He had been Louis's confessor, and by the king's will he was chosen as confessor for Louis XV. Orleans not only refused to confirm this choice, but Le Tellier was at once ordered to leave the court. The place of confessor was given to the Abbé Fleury, a man of piety and learning, who had been a friend of Fénelon, and whose ecclesiastical history was one of the most creditable historical works of the time.

The regent declared, with some degree of ostentation, that the orthodox zeal of Louis XIV. was not to his taste. In the rigor with which the services of their religion had been forbidden to Protestants, even the chapels of the foreign ministers were narrowly watched,

[1] The character and the conduct of D'Aguesseau are discussed in all the contemporary journals and memoirs. On the whole, he lost in popular estimation by his career as chancellor. "Et homo factus est," the wits said, when he was induced to resume the seals and endeavor to buoy up the sinking fortunes of Law. — *Journal de Barbier*, July 2, 1720.

lest French citizens should obtain access to them under the guise of attachés to the embassy, and thus enjoy the privilege of worshiping God according to their own consciences.[1] It was a very minute form of persecution. Complaints were soon made to the regent that French Protestants were attending services at these chapels, but such espionage was no longer received with favor. It was well enough to prevent such acts in the late reign, he said, but at present they should try to convert Protestants by reason, rather than by the methods of 1685.[2]

If the regent had been advised by men as liberal as himself, it is possible that he would have repealed the odious measures of the late king, and allowed the Huguenots to live in France in the enjoyment of the privileges secured to them by the Edict of Nantes. The intolerance of Louis XIV.'s character appeared in the final act of his life. In his will he declared that his strongest desire had been to preserve the purity of the faith, and he exhorted the council of regency to allow no changes in the regulations which he had adopted. Such a recommendation had little weight with the Duke of Orleans. On the other hand, Henry IV., by whom the Edict of Nantes had been issued, was, of all his ancestors, the one whom the regent most admired, and whom he was most desirous to imitate. The courtier who wished to please could not do better than suggest a resemblance between Orleans and Henry of Navarre. There was a certain superficial similarity between the two men. Though Henry never indulged in the debauchery in which

[1] Many letters and reports on this subject can be found in the official correspondence.

[2] MS. *Journal de la Régence*, i. 251.

Orleans was often plunged, yet rigorous propriety as to the relations of the sexes was not a marked feature in the character of the most popular of French kings. Orleans possessed an easy and pleasing address, an affable presence, a happy facility of expression, in all of which he flattered himself that he resembled his famous ancestor. So far as religious belief was concerned, their characters were no more unlike than might be accounted for by the century which had elapsed. Henry had contented himself with a nominal profession of the faith which it was for his interest to espouse. Orleans lived in the eighteenth century; he could avow an open infidelity without forfeiting his position, and he could find plenty of associates who held the same views.

The regent did not belong to that lowest class of debauchees who seek to atone for profligacy by persecution. His mind was liberal, and bigotry was odious to him. It would have been easy for him to follow the example of toleration which Henry had set. He might have made his regency memorable by again establishing religious liberty in France. Nothing which he could have done would have so enhanced the well-being of that country. All the harm, both moral and material, which France had suffered from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes could have been undone by the recall of those who had fled from persecution, and by the restoration of religious liberty to those who suffered from oppression. The regent had not sufficient vigor of character to pursue such a policy in the face of opposition, and there were none to encourage him in well-doing. Dubois was the only one of his advisers who had enough intelligence to appreciate the advantages of such a measure, and

Dubois already had the vision of a cardinal's hat before his eyes. He was not apt to recommend any step which might be ill-received at Rome. The Duke of St. Simon was consulted on this question, and he has preserved the arguments by which he claimed to have turned the regent from his purpose. It was natural that a nobleman, who thought that the welfare of the kingdom depended on a judge's taking off his hat to a duke, should apprehend its ruin from a restoration of religious liberty.[1] The regent allowed himself to be diverted from a purpose which he had the intelligence to form and the weakness to abandon. The conception shows the strength of Orleans's intellect, which might have made the regency one of the most brilliant epochs in French history; its relinquishment illustrates the facility by which he allowed his rule to be productive of more harm than good.

Though the weakness of the regent's character prevented him from effecting any important changes in the nature of the government, he anticipated many of the views which became prevalent in France half a century later. He was an admirer of the English political system; he demanded liberty for himself, and he was willing to accord it to others. He loved to tell of the adventures of a young man who ventured to compete with Charles II. for the affection of one of his favorites, and how the fortunate rival dared to show himself in the presence of the sovereign without fear of being sent to the Tower.

Later in the century, English liberties were loudly praised in France, and *lettres de cachet* were denounced as an unbearable tyranny, but hardly a trace

[1] The arguments of St. Simon against the recall of the Huguenots can be found in his *Mémoires*, t. xiii. 83 *et seq.*

of such sentiments can be found in the period of the regency. One of the noblemen, to whom the regent related this anecdote with approval, declared that such a condition of things was an insult to royalty and a scandal to the kingdom.[1] A system of constitutional government, and guaranties for personal liberty, excited little admiration among the bourgeoisie. They contrasted their own tranquillity with the turmoil of England. "That nation is doomed never to be tranquil, and to be the slave of the liberty of which it boasts, and which it pursues with such audacity," wrote one of the most intelligent of French lawyers of the English in 1722.[2]

The French indulged in the luxury of criticising their rulers, but there was no demand for important changes in the form of government. The evils that existed were regarded as the necessary evils of any government. Occasional complaints of taxation, occasional wrangles with the Parliament, were of no more significance than similar manifestations in the past. The great majority of the public concerned themselves very little about the administration of affairs. They had no voice in it, and they regarded it as none of their business. Newspapers were almost unknown; those which appeared contained no news; they were read only by the few who were interested in court gossip.

The administration of Louis XIV. left to his successor a legacy of debt as well as of persecution. The indebtedness of the state was so heavy that it was impossible to pay the interest upon it, and meet the ordinary expenses of the government. In such a

[1] *Mém. de St. Simon*, xi. 169 *et seq.*

[2] *Journal de Marais*, ii. 293.

dilemma, its repudiation was suggested as the simplest policy to adopt. The conception of monarchical government strengthened the arguments for such a course. The nation was absorbed in the monarch; the king was the state. If this were so, could it not be argued with plausibility that those who lent their money, lent it to the king? Why should the burden of his recklessness be cast upon the nation when he had passed away? Why was Louis XV. more liable for the debts of his ancestor than any other grandson of a bankrupt grandsire? If the principle were established that money borrowed by a king of France was a debt against him alone, and was not binding upon his successors, it might indeed be difficult for future sovereigns to contract indebtedness, of which the payment would be problematical. But such a result would be a gain. A king would have to live within his income. He could not ruin himself and his country by undertaking wars to gratify his ambition, or by building palaces to please his vanity. The credit of the French kings was so bad that they could only borrow at ruinous rates; it would be much better if they could not borrow at all.[1]

Such arguments were not regarded as valid by the regent. An endeavor was made to keep faith with the public creditor, but how to do it was a question that would have embarrassed a Colbert or a Turgot. The detail of the condition of the treasury is not important. In round figures, the expenses of the government for the year 1715 were about 150,000,000 livres; the gross receipts of taxation were 165,000,000, but after deducting the amount assigned to secure the

[1] These views were well set out by St. Simon, but he was not the only one who held them.

payment of interest, less than 70,000,000 remained. There was a floating debt of nearly a milliard livres, and the entire indebtedness was over three milliards. The debt had increased twenty-fold in thirty years. Such were the financial results of the government of Louis XIV.[1] The Duke of Noailles, the chief of the council of finances, wrote to Mme. de Maintenon: "We have found matters in a more terrible state than can be described; both the king and his subjects ruined; nothing paid for several years; confidence entirely gone. Hardly ever has the monarchy been in such a condition, though it has several times been near its ruin. . . . The picture is not agreeable, but it is only too true." [2]

A large portion of the debt had been contracted at usurious rates. The credit of the government was poor, and its financial system was bad. It had been the victim of its necessities during the war of the Spanish Succession, as it had been during the period of the Fronde. The treasury had been plundered under the ministry of Chamillart, as it had been plundered under the ministry of Fouquet. The same causes produced the same results. Those who dealt with the administration of the finances, who lent money to the government, or who obtained the farm of the taxes, made unconscionable profits in the seventeenth century, and they continued to do the same in the eighteenth century. The evil was never cured until there was a radical change in the system of the imposition and the collection of taxes. No intelligent

[1] Forbonnais, *Recherches sur les finances*, t. ii.; *Lettres du Duc de Noailles*, and *Déliberations du conseil des finances*, MSS. Bib. Nat.; *Recherches historiques sur le système de Law*, 1–14.

[2] Noailles to Mme. de Maintenon, September 21, 1715.

effort was made at such a reformation until the ministry of Turgot. The financial system of the old régime was not destroyed until the Revolution.

The Duke of Orleans and his advisers did now what had been done before: they obtained present relief by measures that were harsh and often unjust, and they left the system to breed further evils in the future. A rigorous examination was made into the nature of the indebtedness of the state, and the nominal amount was largely reduced. The rate of interest was lowered on the sums that were held to be justly due. The frauds of those who dealt with the government were notorious; those who obtained the farm of the taxes paid to the state too little, and took from the people too much; those who lent money to the king received usurious rates of interest. During the more disastrous period of the war of the Succession, it was said that, on an issue of 32,000,000 livres of rentes, the government received only 8,000,000.[1] A special court was organized to investigate the frauds of government contractors and officials, and to inflict upon them such punishments and such fines as it saw fit.[2] It was vested with an unlimited authority, which it exercised with harshness. Those who had dealt with the government were required to state the amount of their wealth, and they were then assessed on the theory that they had made too much. Samuel Bernard, the great banker, assessed himself 9,000,000 livres, and paid it voluntarily.[3] The entire amount

[1] Dutot, *Réflexions politiques sur les finances*, 866. Dutot was one of the officers of Law's bank.

[2] Edicts, March 7 and 17, 1716; *Anc. lois françaises*, xxi. 80, 85; *Déclaration*, September 18, 1716.

[3] MS. *Journal de la Régence*, ii. 513.

of fines imposed by the Chamber of Justice was over 200,000,000, and the names of over 4,400 persons appeared on the lists. In addition to the loss of money, severe penalties were inflicted on many. The populace was exultant at the sufferings of a class of men whom it had little reason to love. One offender was condemned to make reparation by marching to the pillory with bare feet, carrying a lighted torch, and bearing a sign on which were the words: "Robber of the people." After that, he was sent to the galleys. His sufferings excited no compassion, and the mob cried out to hang him. At the Tournelle, a brutal concierge fastened him to a tree, and allowed the mob, at four sous a head, to watch his misery and vent their reproaches. When another was exposed in the pillory, he was covered with mud hurled at him by the women that stood around. They even complained when he was allowed additional covering to protect his half-naked body from the excessive cold.[1] Both of these criminals claimed that they had simply carried out the orders of men high in authority, and this was probably true.

The severity with which the Chamber of Justice proceeded soon transferred popular sympathy to the side of the offenders, and a year after its organization the court was abolished.[2] Its procedure was so arbitrary that, while some were punished too severely, many escaped altogether, and this was still more true of the fines. It is doubtful if the state received one half of the amounts imposed.[3] Few men found it so hard to say No as the Duke of Orleans, and the

[1] *Journal de la Régence*, ii. 391, 649.

[2] Edict of March, 1717.

[3] *Mém. de Noailles*, ed. Michaud, 264.

facility of his character was utilized. It was an open scandal that a large number of financiers escaped paying anything to the state, by bribing those who had the ear of the regent. "For 300,000 livres I will get you a remission of your penalty," said a count to a contractor who had been fined 1,200,000. "Ah, Monsieur le Comte, you are too late," replied the contractor; "I have already made a bargain with Mme. la Comtesse for 150,000."[1] If this conversation was fictitious, it was a type of many bargains which were actually made and carried out.

By the measures adopted, the nominal indebtedness of the government was largely reduced, and the amount of the annual interest was diminished in still larger proportion. It was a partial bankruptcy, in justification of which it could be urged that a considerable proportion of the indebtedness was fraudulent, and that to pay it in full was impossible.

The expenses of the government were also reduced. The regent secured peace for France during his administration, and as a result the cost of the army was lessened, and the extraordinary expenses, which had long swollen the budget, disappeared. With more questionable wisdom, a reduction of about ten millions was made in the sum spent annually on the navy.[2] There was a great need of economy, but the navy was the last department in which it should have been practiced. The French marine was destined long to be neglected, and the result was disastrous to the interests of that country. No successor arose to Colbert in the zeal which he had shown to develop the naval strength of France.

[1] Cochut, *Law, son système et son époque.*

[2] *Comparison des dépenses de* 1716 *avec celles de* 1715 ; Forbonnais, ii. 451; *Projet des dépenses*, 1717, 1718.

Some reductions were made in taxation, but it was characteristic of the spirit of the old régime that the tax which was first reduced was the one which should have been last retained. A capitation tax had been imposed during the late war, the burden of which to some extent fell upon all classes. The repeal of it was vehemently demanded as soon as the war was ended. The government hazarded a deficit, rather than continue a duty which was in part paid by the privileged classes. The capitation was offensive because it was fair.[1]

A resort to the unfortunate practices of the late reign counteracted the benefits that might have resulted from some of the measures adopted by the regent. The value of the currency was lowered. The government called it in for recoinage, and hoped to make a profit of 200,000,000 livres on receiving gold-pieces at sixteen livres and reissuing them at twenty. Hardly one third of this amount was realized.[2] The depreciation of the currency seemed a temporary advantage to debtors, but the injury done to business at large more than offset this gain. Trade continued dead. There was still an annual deficiency in the government budget.

Lémontey estimates that from 814 to 1726 the amount of silver contained in a French livre was reduced from twelve ounces to one sixth of an ounce,

[1] The relics of the capitation tax were so arranged that in time it fell almost entirely on the unprivileged classes. A count who on an income of 40,000 livres originally paid from 1,700 to 2,500 livres, shortly before the Revolution paid but 400. A bourgeois with 6,000 livres of revenue, who had at first paid 70 livres, at last paid 720. — Taine, *L'ancien Régime*, 475, 476.

[2] For these measures, see *Lettres de Noailles* and *Registres du Conseil des Finances;* also, Forbonnais, ii. 389, 390.

and that, by fraudulent recoinages scattered over nine hundred years, the government had endeavored to plunder the people out of seventy-one times the entire value of coin in circulation.[1] In 1726, under the ministry of Fleury, the value of silver and gold was at last placed substantially where it still remains. From then to the Revolution, France, for the first time in her history, experienced the benefits of a currency of unvarying value. It is not strange that we should find in that period a greater prosperity than the country had ever before enjoyed.

[1] Lemontey, i. 61.

CHAPTER XI.

DUBOIS AND THE ENGLISH ALLIANCE.

1715–1717.

THERE was little probability of important changes in the foreign policy of France while this remained under the control of a council. But there was an obscure retainer of the Duke of Orleans who had no fear of innovations, who was restless to make a place for himself in the world, and who combined industry and boldness with an acute and active mind. It was not strange that the influence of a body of respectable and incapable officials steadily grew less, and that the entire control of the foreign policy of the kingdom was soon in the hands of an able and a resolute man.

The Cardinal Dubois has enjoyed the sad distinction of being declared the most wicked, unscrupulous, and corrupt of all the prime ministers of France. Even historians of accuracy and fairness still refer to the power held by a low-born, profligate, and apostate priest, as the worst phase of degradation in the dissipation of the regency. Dubois was portrayed as a man of the lowest order by the Duke of St. Simon, whose glowing pages have often been received as conclusive evidence as to the events and the characters of his epoch. He was odious to his high-bred colleagues because he was low-bred; he incurred the unfavorable judgment of most of his contemporaries because, in

an age when innovations were regarded with suspicion, he dared to depart from the political traditions of the past. With the exception of a few modern scholars, he has found none to defend him.

Certainly Dubois was not a man of lofty ideals or of unselfish purposes. His morality was not edifying, but it compared favorably with that of most of his associates; he was fond of money, but he was less greedy in its pursuit than the majority of those who had equal opportunities to acquire it; he pushed his own fortunes with unremitting vigor, but he is not the only man in high position who has been guilty of that offense. If an unprejudiced study does not discover in Cardinal Dubois a statesman of the capacity of Richelieu, nor a patriot of the purity of Lafayette, it does show him to be a man of unusual ability, and not a man of unique badness. There is no reason for lamenting his tenure of office as a degradation to France. Careful investigation leaves the complexion of Dubois's moral character somewhat dusky, but it was by no means as black as it has been painted. If he is to be judged as a statesman, there is still less reason for regarding his elevation to power as unseemly. There were few of those who had control of the affairs of France in the eighteenth century whose record was more creditable. Dubois was neither a trifler like Calonne, nor an imbecile like Brienne. If in character he was inferior to Fleury, in intellect he was his superior. Had France continued to be governed by the policy of Dubois, she would have been spared the humiliation which she suffered from the follies and the vices of his successors.

Guillaume Dubois was born at Brives in 1656. His father was a country doctor, who combined the

sale of drugs with the practice of his art. As the son of the apothecary Dubois was always known, and it is certain that this had much to do with the disfavor with which he was regarded by his contemporaries. The young Dubois received a good education, chiefly because his promise as a student obtained the patronage of those who were willing to aid him. At the age of twenty-seven, he took the first step on the road which was to lead to fortune: he was appointed under-preceptor of the king's nephew, then known as the Duke of Chartres, who afterwards became the regent. This appointment is of itself the most conclusive evidence that at that age Dubois had a reputation for good parts, and not a reputation for bad morals. He did not owe his promotion to influential kinsmen. He was recommended for the place by the head of the college where he had studied, who was a man of learning and piety; and he obtained the position from the head preceptor, who was a man of the highest character.

It is now, however, that the special depravity of Dubois's nature is supposed to have developed itself. To the steadfast favor of the regent he owed his subsequent fortune; this favor he is said to have gained by a shameful betrayal of his trust, and by abusing his position to initiate Orleans in the career of debauchery which he pursued during life. A preceptor who taught a pious youth to be a debauchee would certainly possess a moral character of a very low order. But often as this accusation has been repeated against Dubois, there is not enough evidence of such conduct to authorize a judge to submit the question to a petty jury. It is not too much to demand that the facts of history, as well as the offenses of some obscure miscreant, should be established by proof.

The Duke of St. Simon declares that Dubois induced his pupil to plunge into debauchery, to despise religion, to regard as sham all pretense of honesty in man or of virtue in woman.[1] St. Simon was a contemporary, and his memoirs are among the most valuable authorities for the history of his time. But there are few writers whose statements should be more carefully scrutinized, few whose animosities have more deeply tinged all that they said. When St. Simon completed his memoirs he was an old man, embittered with the world, filled with rancor against those who had been more successful than he in the contest of life, wrapped in the intense pride of birth, through which he had all his days regarded his fellows askance. He hated Dubois because he was a vulgar adventurer who had gained the favor of the Duke of Orleans, because that prince had chosen to be guided by the son of an apothecary instead of by the son of a duke. With the venom in which he excels all writers, he has described the character of Dubois: "Every vice contended in him for mastery. Avarice, debauchery, and ambition were his gods; perfidy, flattery, and servility were his means. . . . An odor of falseness exhaled from every pore. . . . He owed his elevation to his vices. As preceptor, he corrupted the morals of his pupil; as minister, he debased his fatherland and sold it to England; as prince of the church, he died from the result of his debauches, blaspheming God."[2]

Such accusations cannot be received without examination, even when made by an associate and a contemporary. Those whom the Duke of St. Simon hated — and there were few whom he did not hate — he honestly believed to be the most debased of men. The

[1] *Mém. de St. Simon*, xi. 177.

[2] *Ib.*, xi. 175, 176.

Duke of Noailles was a man of character and fair capacity, well regarded in his own day, and well spoken of by historians of the time. But he incurred the animosity of St. Simon, and it is thus that he describes one who could be fairly summed up as an average, second-rate soldier and politician: "I will not exaggerate the picture. Absolute truth shall be here, as always, my only guide. . . . The Duke of Noailles was the most exact, the most faithful, the most perfect copy of the serpent which beguiled Eve, and destroyed the happiness of the race, that humanity has been able to produce."[1]

It is evident that, seen in the haze of St. Simon's animosities, personages of ordinary stature became strange and monstrous. His description of Dubois's character, which has been accepted as if it were a part of Holy Writ, is far from being accurate. The vices of Dubois have been magnified upon the panorama of history. The accusation that he obtained his pupil's favor by corrupting his morals has been repeated by historians from Voltaire to Martin. But the charge was first made when he had become a powerful minister. His infamy was not discovered until he had become famous. On the other hand, his actual relations with his pupil appear clearly enough from the testimony of those who knew him when he was only a humble retainer. Dubois was appointed under-preceptor of the future regent in 1683. Four years later the preceptor, St. Laurent, died, a man of the most upright character. He recommended Dubois for his own place. The appointment was made by Louis XIV., who had then reformed, and frowned upon any suspicion of immorality. Every detail in the life of

[1] *Mém. de St. Simon*, xi. 227.

a prince like the Duke of Chartres was known to the community. There were plenty of men who desired so responsible a position as that of his preceptor. We may be sure that, if there had been aught to criticise in the conduct of a low-born man like Dubois, it would have been reported to the king. The fact that Dubois was chosen for this position by Louis XIV. is persuasive evidence that, down to that time, nothing in his life had given occasion for scandal. He was then thirty-one years of age.

The Duke of Chartres was growing to be a man, and he soon became known as one of the most dissipated of the young nobility. In this fact there was nothing extraordinary. When only seventeen he was married to a woman for whom he had no affection. He was surrounded by associates who were young, frivolous, and debauched. He was exposed to the temptations which lie in wait for a prince. He had no need of a middle-aged pedant as a teacher in the practices of dissipation.

There was one person who certainly kept close watch of the duke's conduct, and that was his mother. She lamented the weaknesses of an only son, for whom she had a passionate fondness. If his preceptor had been, as Voltaire calls him, the purveyor of his pleasures, the fact could not have been concealed, during a long term of years, from an anxious and keen-witted mother. The letters which she wrote to Dubois, extending over sixteen years, are the best evidence that he was faithful to his trust, and that he endeavored to restrain his pupil from the dissipation into which he plunged.[1] "I assure you," she

[1] The work of the Comte de Seilhac, *L'Abbé Dubois*, though of small critical value, contains a large number of valuable letters and documents in reference to Dubois.

wrote Dubois, "of my gratitude for your endeavors to make an upright man of my son."[1] "I shall be rejoiced if I can find some occasion of showing you my gratitude for what you do for my son and for me." "Surely you will find the recompense which your zeal and your pains merit."[2] Three years later she writes: "M. de Labetère" (the under-governor, a man of estimable character, and whose duties kept him constantly with the duke) "praised you yesterday for your zeal for the welfare of my son. Although I had no doubt of it, this gave me pleasure."[3] In 1696, she wrote to Dubois bewailing the misconduct of her son, "who had been educated with such care, to whom St. Laurent and you had taught moral and noble principles."[4] "Whatever happens, I shall always be thankful to you for all the pains you have taken, and shall hope at some time to show my gratitude."[5] "I know right well that the bad conduct of my son is in no wise your fault, and I assure you of the continuance of my esteem."[6] "If it was not my duty to endeavor to correct my son by my remonstrances, I should long ago have renounced the labor, from the hopelessness of success. I admire your patience in persisting. Such pains are more meritorious before God than if you fasted on bread and water."[7] Ten years afterwards we find the mother still assuring Dubois of the continuance of her friendship and esteem.[8]

[1] Princess Palatine to Dubois, March 25, 1691.
[2] *Ib.*, June 15 and August 13, 1691.
[3] *Ib.*, June 11, 1694.
[4] *Ib.*, July 12, 1696.
[5] *Ib.*, August 6, 1696.
[6] *Ib.*, August 10, 1696.
[7] *Ib.*, January 28, 1696.
[8] *Ib.*, letters of 1706.

Later in the abbé's career, the princess palatine became very unfriendly to him. He offended her, as he offended many others, when, from being a humble follower of the Duke of Orleans, he became a power in the state. She denounced him as a rogue and a trickster, as a traitor who sold his country, and in whom the truth could not be found, but she never complained of his conduct in reference to her son, because she, best of all the world, knew that there was nothing of which to complain.

Louis XIV. was always informed of the conduct of those connected with the court; he took what seems an excessive interest in a system of minute espionage. The behavior of the abbé did not escape his attention, but he found nothing in it to forfeit his favor.[1] He bestowed upon him a modest living. In 1698, he intrusted Dubois with a diplomatic position of minor importance.

The admirers of Fénelon justly claim for him the purest reputation of the time in which he lived. He was preceptor of the Duke of Burgundy, and in a position where he must have known Dubois's character

[1] Among the other fables due to the credulous brain of St. Simon is that Dubois asked of Louis XIV. a cardinal's hat, as a reward for his influence in inducing Orleans to marry the king's bastard daughter, and that he lost Louis's favor by so preposterous a demand. It would have been most preposterous, considering Dubois's humble position at that time, and that is one of the proofs that he never made it. Whatever else he was, certainly he was not a fool. As a matter of fact, at the time when he was supposed to have been demanding a cardinalate, we find him asking for a very modest living, and receiving it with expressions of good-will from Louis XIV. and Père la Chaise, "as a person of merit, learning, and virtue." — Dubois to Père la Chaise, August, 1692; Père la Chaise to the Duc de Chartres, 1692.

thoroughly. He would have recommended no one for an ecclesiastical preferment whom he thought to be an evil-liver. In 1691, he urged Dubois's appointment as prior of Brives.[1] Twenty years later we find him writing, "The Abbé Dubois, formerly preceptor of the Duke of Orleans, has been my friend for very many years."[2]

In view of such testimony, it is idle to claim that Dubois began his career as a debauchee, or that he gained his master's favor, by assuming the functions of a purveyor. On the other hand, he made no claim to any remarkable sanctity of character. He led such a life as many another abbé of the time, indulged in the forms of dissipation which he found to his taste, and paid very little attention to the religious career to which he had nominally devoted himself. This was not commendable, but it was far from unusual. He was by no means a conspicuous example of immorality. He never participated in the suppers of the Palais Royal, he had no taste for the roués, he did not seek to base his fortunes on the favor of some mistress of the regent. During the years that he occupied important office, he led a life of unusual abstemiousness. His enemies said that past excesses compelled him to refrain from further indulgence. It might be said with quite as much truth that his prodigious industry and restless activity left him no time for dissipation.

Indeed, the vices of Dubois's character were of a different nature. He lusted for power, and place, and a conspicuous position before the world, far more than

[1] Fénelon to Dubois, August 12, 1691.

[2] Fénelon, Archevêque de Cambrai to Mme. Roujaut, October 14, 1711.

he did for the pleasures of the senses. It was the envy excited by his remarkable fortune that filled his contemporaries with horror at the spectacle of so wicked a priest. Dubois was a politician in fact, and a priest only in name. When he was consecrated as Archbishop of Cambray, his enemies complained because he had to receive instructions before he could say the mass. But as he made no claim to be spiritually minded, it was much more seemly that he should have taken no part in the ministrations of the church. He was not a priest at all, until he was obliged, three years before his death, to take orders to be made an archbishop. Like many French abbés, his relations with the church consisted solely in having a share in her revenues. If Dubois had not risen from such a humble position, his immorality would have aroused little comment. A prince might be an archbishop, and not allow this to interfere with a career of pleasure, but it was regarded as unseemly when a vulgar man filled high ecclesiastical office with little regard for ecclesiastical propriety. A cardinal whose father had pounded a pestle was bound to more discreet conduct than one whose father had wielded a marshal's baton. Certainly we do not have to go beyond the limits of French history to find an abundance of cardinals and archbishops whose immorality, and whose indifference to religion, was far more avowed, more unblushing, more outrageous, than anything ever laid to Dubois's charge, and by whose conduct the public was very little disturbed.

Sixty years before, Cardinal Retz had endeavored to become prime minister, and it was not his lack of morals that defeated his ambition. He was a far more notorious evil-liver than Dubois. While Dubois dis-

charged no religious duties, Retz claimed to perform those of a bishop. He exhorted the faithful on their sins; he has left for posterity a humorous account of the way in which he combined the mysteries of religion with the practices of gallantry. But Retz was a man of high family, the grandson of a marshal of France. His immorality was viewed with placid unconcern.

Later in the century, Cardinal Rohan, of the great family of Rohan, was a far more profligate man than Dubois, and he aggravated the matter by being a fool besides; yet he was, on the whole, popular with the community.

Such examples, which could be multiplied indefinitely, do not excuse the fact that Dubois was a worldly-minded, unscrupulous, and greedy man, who cared nothing for religion except as it would advance his ambition, but they do justify his own claim, that the most of those who denounced him as a wicked priest were more disturbed by his birth than by his morals.

They were not without some excuse for their prejudices. Dubois was not more ambitious, or intriguing, or greedy than many a well-born associate, but he lacked any refinement that might conceal such defects of character. He was vulgar in pushing his fortunes, and ill-mannered when he had attained success. "You can make a cardinal out of a cad," said one of his enemies, "but you cannot make a gentleman." [1] This criticism was just. Dubois never acquired either the instincts or the manners of a well-bred, high-minded man. He became prime minister, but he never got to be a gentleman.

[1] *Journal de Marais*, ii. 272.

When the Duke of Orleans was made regent, Dubois was almost sixty. His life had been passed in obscurity. He had remained on friendly terms with his former pupil, and he had been intrusted with a mission for him in Spain, but a retainer of Orleans had little opportunity to advance his fortunes while Louis XIV. was alive. Dubois was not a person of sufficient importance to be admitted to any of the councils instituted by the regent, but he was now in favor with the head of the state; he was eager for an opportunity to show his capacity, and he soon made one for himself.

George I. became king of England a year before the death of Louis XIV. His throne was far from secure, and the Jacobites still based their hopes upon the friendship and the assistance which the French king had so long extended to the family of Stuart. By the treaty of Utrecht, Louis had given his word and faith as a king that neither he nor his heirs would molest the English princes of the line established by act of Parliament, and that they would give neither counsel nor assistance, neither money nor arms nor aid, to any other person laying claim to the throne of England.[1] In conformity with the provisions of the treaty, the Pretender had been obliged to seek refuge in the possessions of the Duke of Lorraine. While the French had thus formally abandoned the interests of a family which had inflicted almost as much injury on France as on England, both Louis and his people strongly desired the restoration of the Stuart prince to the throne of his ancestors. The feeling was natural. The son of James II. was a bigoted Catholic, and the Catholicism of the French

[1] Articles 4 and 5 of treaty.

court abated nothing of its zeal as the king grew older. The antagonism between the two peoples was strong. The French may have had an instinctive feeling that the restoration of the Stuarts would be the greatest evil that could befall the English, and this strengthened their interest in the fortunes of the exiled family. We could hardly expect to find Louis XIV. very severe in refusing aid and comfort to the Pretender, when the English ministry, with the approval of the English queen and the good-will of a large part of the English people, were engaged in planning for a restoration of the Stuarts. The accession of the house of Hanover changed the aspect of affairs. George and his ministers had no predilection for Jacobitism, and the insecurity of his position rendered him apprehensive of any assistance which the Stuart prince might receive from French sympathizers. On the other hand, the Jacobites could no longer await tranquilly the demise of the sovereign. Anne was dead, and George was on the throne. The Pretender must assert his rights by arms, as there was now no possibility of his being recalled by acclamation.

A great pressure was brought on Louis XIV. to furnish money and soldiers for an expedition to England in behalf of the Chevalier of St. George. His ministers approved of such an endeavor. His own sympathies were doubly enlisted: the chevalier was a Catholic, and he was a lawful prince. His was the cause alike of religion and of royalty. How far, under other circumstances, Louis XIV. would have felt himself controlled by the terms of the treaty of Utrecht is uncertain. It was a time when sovereigns did not allow their agreements to interfere with their interests, or with their sympathies. But Louis was both wise and

sincere in his resolve that France should not again be involved in war. He would not require any further sacrifice from an exhausted country, either to gratify the king of Spain, or him who claimed to be the king of England. "As I wish to avoid any pretext of rupture," he wrote immediately after Anne's death, "I have dissuaded the Chevalier of St. George from his intention of going to England, and have made him see that failure in such an enterprise was sure, deprived, as he would be, of all assistance from me." [1]

The partisans of the Stuarts continued, however, their endeavors to excite a rising in behalf of the good cause. The sanguine statements of the exiles were confirmed by the French minister in England. He wrote that the party of the Pretender was so strong that a revolution was imminent, and to excite it needed only the hope of aid from France.[2] Berwick and Bolingbroke besought Louis for troops, but he refused to furnish them.[3] Of money he had none to give, even if he had desired. The great banker, Bernard, assured the English ambassador that the French king could not raise a sou for the Pretender, no matter what his wishes might be.[4] All that Louis did was to ask the king of Spain to advance some money, and Philip gave some slight pecuniary aid to the heir of the Stuarts.[5] The Jacobite leaders believed that if

[1] Louis to Philip, August 23, 1714. This important letter states clearly Louis's position, which has often been misstated.

[2] See letters of Iberville for 1715, *Aff. Etr.* Iberville allowed his sympathies to affect his judgment.

[3] See *Mém. de Berwick*, and letters of Bolingbroke published in Stanhope's *History of England*, vol. i.

[4] Journal of Stair, July 31, 1715; *Hardwicke Papers*, vol. ii.

[5] MS. *Papiers de Torcy*, 88; Bolingbroke to James, August, 5, 1715.

Louis had lived he would have continued to furnish them indirect aid, and at last, perhaps, would have given open assistance, but it is unlikely that he would have hazarded the fortunes of a war in behalf of the helpless recluse whom they sought to place on the English throne.[1]

The preparations for an insurrection, and the sympathy with which such an attempt was regarded in France, filled George and his advisers with apprehension. They had little hope of accomplishing anything with the ministers of Louis XIV. These were sure to do all that they dared in favor of a Catholic prince, and against a king whom they regarded as an heretical usurper. But Louis XIV. was sinking fast. The Duke of Orleans was not in sympathy with men who had shown no friendship for him. It was the manifest policy of England to support his interests against the claims made by Philip of Spain. If Philip became regent, or if he ascended the throne of France on Louis XV.'s death, the provisions of the treaty of Utrecht would be swept away; the benefits of the war of the Spanish Succession would be lost; the English would have to deal with a prince whose inclinations on behalf of the Pretender were as strong as those of Louis XIV., and who would be less restrained by feelings of prudence from giving expression to them.

[1] For these hopes of the Jacobites, see letter of Bolingbroke to Mar, September 20, 1715. Louis's resolution not to involve France in war in behalf of the Pretender appears clearly from his letters to Iberville in the summer of 1715, *Aff. Etr.*, t. 268–270. He will give no aid to foment troubles in England, he writes on June 10; and as late as August 22 he says that the Pretender has neither troops nor vessels, and cannot invade England.

Dubois has been credited with devising the famous union of interests between the house of Hanover and the Duke of Orleans, but such an idea was first suggested by the English; it was urged by them while Louis XIV. was alive, and before Dubois had begun his diplomatic career. While it was still uncertain what disposition Louis would make of the regency by his will, Lord Stair, the English ambassador, was instructed to cultivate intimate relations with the Duke of Orleans; to offer the assistance of England to secure him the regency; and to assure him that, should the dauphin die, she would support his rights to the throne of France.[1] In return for this proffered aid, it was hoped that the duke would oppose the endeavors of the Pretender, and that he would be ready, when he should have the power, to give England satisfaction in the matters concerning which she sought redress in vain from Louis XIV.[2] Orleans received these assurances of sympathy with warm expressions of gratitude, but nothing more than polite words resulted from the negotiations.[3] The English were exuberant in their professions of interest, and felt that their ardor was not returned. Stanhope wrote that he could wish the Duke of Orleans to realize thoroughly the zeal of the king in his behalf; that the duke was the dupe of those who claimed that his regency would be unopposed; and that he was

[1] See letters and journal of Stair, summer of 1715.

[2] Instructions to Stair, January, 1715, record office, 352; Stanhope to Stair, July 14, 1715, cited in Wiesener's *Le Regent, l'Abbé Dubois, et les Anglais.*

[3] Stair describes the situation in his journal, August 6: "I have no news of the abbé, which makes me think that the Duke of Orleans is willing to let the affair of the Pretender take its train without meddling with it."

allowing himself to be cajoled in the hope of being named regent by Louis's will.[1]

Though Orleans did not seek to utilize these friendly offers, the news of his accession to the regency was received with great pleasure by the English ministers. "If the Duke of Orleans receives as much applause in France as in England," wrote the Spanish ambassador, "there was never a more fortunate ruler."[2] A Jacobite insurrection soon broke out, and threatened the overthrow of the house of Hanover. In France, though the king of Spain took no steps to disturb Orleans as regent, he still insisted that his renunciation was of no validity, and there could be no doubt that he would seek to enforce his claims if the young king died. What so natural, said the English, as that George and Orleans, two rulers equally threatened, should combine for their mutual defense! To each of them the treaty of Utrecht guaranteed the right to a throne; let them agree to enforce its provisions, and protect the interests of both parties. Stair was authorized to propose to Orleans a treaty by which the English would guarantee to him the peaceful possession of the regency, and the throne of France if Louis XV. should die leaving no sons. Nothing was asked of him in return except that France should, in like manner, guarantee George in the occupation of the English throne, and should give no aid to the Pretender.[3]

[1] Stanhope to Stair, August 23 and 28, 1715.

[2] Monteleone to Cellamare, October 15, 1715: "Si el s'r Duque de Orleans logra en Francia tantos aplausos como se los hazen en Inglaterra, no habra havido regente mas dichoso."—*Aff. Etr.*

[3] Instructions to Stair, October 14 and 16, 1715. Stair's journal, October 24.

The regent might thus have made an alliance with England on terms more favorable than those to which he at last agreed; his friendship was now sought, while later he was himself compelled to make the advances. But he was unable to decide upon this policy. Most of his advisers were filled with the sympathy for the Stuart cause which had so long prevailed at the court of Louis XIV. Huxelles, the chief of the council of foreign affairs, Villars, Torcy, St. Simon, were all eager for the success of the Pretender. They were sanguine as well. Scotland was regarded as absolutely lost to the house of Hanover.[1] The Jacobites assured them that England would soon follow the example of the sister kingdom. Even if this were not so, the French ministers consoled themselves with the idea that a Stuart king at Edinburgh, and a German king at London, might be the best arrangement by which to check the overweening power of Great Britain.[2]

Lord Stair was pertinacious in his efforts to induce the regent to ally himself with England. He obtained

[1] *Papiers de Torcy*, i. 40, MS. Bib. Nat. Fr. 10, 670. This valuable résumé of the foreign relations of France during three years was made by Torcy, the minister of foreign affairs under Louis XIV. As a member of the council of regency, he was familiar with Orleans's policy, and as superintendent of posts he obtained an intimate knowledge of diplomatic intrigues by the simple process of opening and reading the letters that passed through his hands. "It is not pleasant to write when one is sure that his letters will be opened," said Stair, letter of December 11, 1715, to Bubb. Such, however, was the practice at many other courts, as well as at that of France.

[2] *Gazette de la Régence*, January 17, 1716. The writer claims that he was told by members of the council of regency that they would assist James to the throne of Scotland, but did not wish him to obtain also that of England.

plenty of fair words, but no treaty of alliance. The irritation of the English at such conduct was not without reason. The Jacobites had no chance, said Stanhope; the folly and the perversity of the Pretender's supporters were stupefying, and so also was the weakness of the regent, who abandoned his own interests to please those imbeciles. If the regent now regarded the troubles of England with indifference, declared Stair, England would watch with equal calmness the embarrassments in which he might afterward be involved.[1]

In his uncertainty, the regent gave fair words to both sides, and he gave a little surreptitious aid to the Jacobites. Bolingbroke was at Paris, and he showed his knowledge of the weak side of Orleans's character by the bribe which he proposed. The regent was anything but a model father of a family, but he atoned for neglecting the education and the morals of his daughters by an excessive desire to get them well married. Would not the Chevalier of St. George, suggested Bolingbroke, who with the aid of France might be king of England, be a very eligible husband for one of them?[2] Orleans would certainly have been pleased to see James III. a king, if one of his daughters could have been the queen.[3]

However, he had no wish to involve France in war, and he continued to play a part which was

[1] *Papiers de Torcy*, i. 17 *et seq.*

[2] Bolingbroke to James, August 15 and November 9, 1715.

[3] Bolingbroke to James, November 9, 1715: "I have opened a new door of access to the regent. He has still the marriage in his head, and a little good fortune would make the bait succeed to draw him on." See, also, Iberville to Torcy, September 26, 1715.

neither dignified nor profitable. He allowed some vessels to be loaded with arms for the use of the rebels. Stanhope said that unless this was rectified forthwith, it would be regarded as an open declaration in behalf of the Pretender. Thereupon the ships were unloaded, and the arms were stored in the royal arsenal. At the same time Orleans assured the Duke of Ormond of his friendship for the cause, and of his intention to furnish an abundance of supplies.[1] The Pretender had to be content with small favors from timid friends, and he wrote Orleans that he could not find words to express his gratitude for all the marks of friendship which he had received.[2] The English, on the other hand, were outspoken in their dissatisfaction.

"The first good news from England will change all this," wrote Stair to Stanhope, and he was right.[3] The intelligence of the Jacobite defeats in Scotland produced consternation in the little coteries of the Palais Royal. "Two days ago the Chevalier of St. George was king of England in everybody's mouth. . . . To-day they begin to talk of him as the Pretender."[4] The complete overthrow of the Jacobite cause soon followed. Left to himself, Orleans had always inclined to the idea of an English alliance. His advisers, who had predicted the success of the Pretender, were shown to have been egregiously wrong, and they had only succeeded in putting their master

[1] Ormond to Chevalier of St. George, October 21, 1715; *The Stuart Dynasty*, 401.

[2] James III. to Orleans, December 26, 1715, cited by Lémontey.

[3] Stair to Stanhope, November 12, 1715.

[4] Journal of Stair, December 1 and 2, 1715.

in a most embarrassing position. One more illustration was furnished of the fact that, whenever France tried to help the Stuarts, she always involved herself in trouble without doing them any good. The Duke of Orleans showed more readiness to proceed to formal negotiations with England than he had before manifested. The repentant offender was not, however, at once restored to the good graces of his former friends. George felt that he had befriended Orleans when he was in need of help, and in return the regent had at most stood neutral when his ally was in peril. If the English king had not been harmed by the insurrection, he had been a good deal frightened, and he considered the regent to have shown himself an ungrateful trifler. Lord Stair courteously but firmly presented to the criminal a list of his misdeeds.[1] The regent was a difficult man to get the better of in a controversy of this kind. He was now warm in his congratulations at the happy success of King George. The best proof that he had given no aid to the Pretender was, he said, the notorious fact that the Stuart prince had landed in Scotland entirely unprovided with arms or munitions of war.[2]

The English were still ready to enter into a treaty with France, but their eagerness had passed with the danger that excited it. Before any alliance could now be made, the regent must show that he was sincere in his protestations of friendship by driving the Pretender to the other side of the Alps. The present French republic has been criticised because it is unwilling to allow those who assert a right to the French throne

[1] See memorial of Stair, printed in Lamberty, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du dix-huitième siècle*, t. ix.

[2] Stair's journal, March 10, 1716 ; Lamberty, ix. 388.

to enjoy the protection of a government which they desire to overthrow. The English were not content with such mild measures in reference to the Stuart family. George wished to pursue his unfortunate rival beyond the limits of civilization ; no one could furnish bed or board, fire or shelter, to the homeless wanderer, and expect any favors from England.

By the treaty of Utrecht, Louis XIV. had agreed to expel the Pretender and his followers from France. The Chevalier of St. George had found refuge in Lorraine, and the regent had declined to demand of its duke that he should abandon the luckless fugitive.[1] After the failure of the rising in 1715, the English government itself made the request. The Duke of Lorraine did not care to give offense to a powerful state, and he requested James to leave. The prince thereupon went to Avignon. That city was part of the papal dominions, and it hardly seemed as if France had any business to interfere with his stay there. But Avignon was surrounded by French territory ; from it the chevalier could easily communicate with his French sympathizers. Orleans was informed that, as a preliminary to any treaty, he must not only expel the English Jacobites from France, but he must bring sufficient pressure to bear upon their chief to compel him to move on. When the Pretender was once safely beyond the Alps, George was ready to make a treaty of alliance, but this was an indispensable prerequisite.[2]

The regent was willing to make the removal of the Pretender from Avignon one of the articles of a

[1] Lamberty, *Réponse au Mémoire*, 389.

[2] Stair to Bubb, March 30, 1716 ; Stanhope to Stair, April 27, 1716 ; Stair to Stanhope, May 9, 1716.

treaty; he would agree that the Stuart prince should actually leave that city before the treaty was finally ratified; he wished with all his heart, he said, that the chevalier was already on the other side of the Alps.[1] But to chase a defeated, luckless, and friendless prince from one of the few places in Europe where he could hope for refuge was neither an agreeable nor a dignified occupation. If such a step were a condition of a treaty of alliance, it might be regarded in France as a political necessity; but even if the Pretender were expelled from Avignon, Orleans was not certain that the English would then agree on terms acceptable in other respects. His conduct would be regarded by his people as alike odious and ridiculous, if he should join in the pursuit of an unhappy man who had done him no harm, and should not obtain for France the benefits of an alliance with England. Thus the negotiations were brought to a standstill. "The French have sent the Pretender to Avignon; if they are sincere, let them find some means to get him out," said Stanhope. "I wish he would leave," replied the regent, "but I don't want to drive him out by threats of stopping the pension of the former queen of England, and then find myself as far as ever from a treaty of alliance."

It was now that the Abbé Dubois appeared on the stage. He is not entitled to the credit of having originated the idea of an alliance between France and England. Nor was it owing to his skill as a diplomatist that the English at last agreed to the alliance, for other complications made the English government as desirous for it as it had been during the Jacobite rising. But he succeeded in holding his volatile mas-

[1] Stair to Stanhope, May 2, 1716.

ter to a policy which was for his own interests and for the interests of France: by his adroitness and his zeal, he smoothed over difficulties, softened the asperity of Stanhope, soothed the susceptibilities of George; he accomplished more in a few days of personal conference than the dignitaries of the council of foreign affairs could have done in as many years of stately diplomacy.

The English king set out for Hanover in July, 1716, accompanied by Stanhope. On the 2d of that month, Dubois left Paris for the Hague, in order to try the effect of a personal interview with the English minister. So irregular a procedure was severely criticised by the functionaries of the foreign office, but the regent was not turned from his purpose.[1] Dubois was so adroit that he might be of use, and so insignificant that he could do little harm. At the Hague the unofficial diplomat assumed to be an amateur in search of rare books and pictures, a rôle for which he was well fitted. He met Stanhope, with whom he had been on friendly terms in former years, and he endeavored to pave the way for an alliance between two princes, whose interests he declared to be the same, and who, if once united, could look with indifference on the hostility of the rest of the world. His master, replied Stanhope, had once been eager to assist Orleans, but he had been chilled to the heart by the belief that the duke had furnished assistance to the Pretender. Whether that prince remained at Rome or Avignon, said the secretary, he regarded as a matter of perfect indifference: if ever France sent an army to invade England, it needed only the Pretender

[1] *Mémoires sécrets de Dubois.* These memoirs, arranged by Sévelinges, contain many valuable documents and letters.

at the head of it to insure its failure; but his master wished to have the Stuart prince on the other side of the Alps. These and similar questions were debated between the English secretary and the French abbé, with the result that Stanhope's disinclination for an alliance with France was considerably diminished.[1]

Dubois brought into his negotiations a vivacity which appears in his correspondence. The diplomacy of the day had a formal and a dignified phraseology; it used many words to say little. It had a speech to itself, like the technical and redundant tautology of the law. Dubois thought that the language with which ordinary humanity expressed its ideas was good enough to discuss treaties. It had the merit of being much more intelligible than the accredited forms. His dispatches remind one of Le Sage in their lightness of touch, and in their humor. In speech as well as in character, Dubois had something of Gil Blas.

This informal conference had one most important effect: it convinced Stanhope and his master that the regent was acting in good faith, and really desired an alliance with England.[2] Other events soon made the English king equally desirous. As Elector of Hanover, he was involved in disputes with the northern powers. He feared a war with Russia; he was already embroiled with Sweden; the possibility of a combination between the Czar and the regent appalled him.[3] He became anxious for an alliance with France, and

[1] For the detail of this interview, see Dubois's dispatch of July 23, 1716, the fullness of which may be imagined from the fact that it occupies 177 pages. It is as vivacious as it is long. See, also, letters of Stanhope to Townsend, July 21, 23, 1716.

[2] Stanhope to Stair, August 3, 1716.

[3] This appears clearly from the letters of Stanhope published in Wiesener, *Le Régent; L'Abbé Dubois et les Anglais;* Stan-

the captious objections by which an agreement of that nature had been delayed were waived.

In August, Dubois went to Hanover, where he continued his negotiations with Stanhope, and had interviews with the king himself. The abbé was indefatigable. Conferences went on day and night. He writes, "We negotiated in our dressing-gowns and in our nightcaps." Where both parties were eager, it was not difficult to agree, but there remained some stumbling-blocks. The English were willing to maintain the rights of the regent to the French throne, but if this were put in so many words it would give abundant opportunity for his enemies to revile. They would declare that the very wording of the treaty showed that Orleans had sacrificed France to secure his own interests. Dubois wished that the English should guarantee the treaty of Utrecht, by which the same result would be attained without its appearing so boldly.[1] But how could Whig ministers consent to guarantee a treaty which they had so often denounced in Parliament as an infamous surrender of the rights of England and her allies? The difficulty was at last adjusted by choosing for the guaranty

hope to Townsend, September 25, 1716: "I was, you know, very averse at first to this treaty, but I think truly, as matters now stand, we ought not to lose a minute in finishing it." Stanhope to H. Walpole, October 6, 1716: "Since it is to be feared that matters may come very soon to an open rupture between the Danes and Muscovites, for which reason his Majesty is desirous of giving the finishing stroke to the treaty with France as soon as possible." To Townsend, October 9: "Had it [the treaty] been less advantageous than I think it really is, the situation of affairs in the north made it absolutely necessary to close with France." — Letters in Coxe's *Memoirs of Walpole*, vol. ii.

[1] Stanhope to Methuen, August 24, 1716.

those articles of the treaty of Utrecht which had regulated the succession of the French throne, and secured the rights of the house of Hanover in England. On other debated questions an agreement was also reached. In October, a preliminary convention between the two countries was signed by Stanhope and Dubois.[1]

It has been said, from that day to this, that Dubois received a pension from England for betraying the interests of his country. The difference in the sums supposed to have been paid shows that the charge rests on no authentic information. One writer says that the pension was 50,000 crowns. Another has it 100,000. The imagination of St. Simon goes far beyond these figures. He says that Dubois received a pension of 40,000 pounds sterling, a sum that would be equivalent to a million dollars a year now.[2] The amount would be a sufficient refutation of the charge. As matter of fact, no one has ever found in the English or the French official papers the slightest evidence that he received a penny. Certainly there was no need to give him a pension of 40,000 pounds, or of one pound, to make him eager for an alliance with England. Such a measure he believed to be for the interests of his master, and upon it rested his hopes for his own advancement. It would have been much more natural if an endeavor had been made to bribe Stanhope, who at the beginning was hostile to an

[1] A formal treaty between England and France was signed at the Hague on November 28, and this was replaced by the treaty of the Triple Alliance, signed January 4, 1717.

[2] St. Simon, xv. 313. St. Simon intimates that this pension began in 1718. Others think it must have begun when the Triple Alliance was made.

alliance with France, and that is exactly what was done.

Dubois described the transaction to his master: "When our negotiations at Hanover were undecided, I found so natural an opportunity to make to M. Stanhope the offer which you directed, that I hazarded the compliment, and I was never more delighted than to see that he allowed me to say it all, even to naming the price, which I fixed at 600,000 livres, to which he listened graciously, and without flying into a passion.[1] My satisfaction was increased when he replied that your Royal Highness was so great a prince that no one need blush to be the object of your generosity. . . . Since then, I have spoken of this matter again seven or eight times." [2]

At the last, Stanhope refused to take the money. He expressed his gratitude to the regent, but he would not receive the bribe. Dubois declared that his conduct was heroic. The adroit abbé did, indeed, view life from the standpoint of Gil Blas. To us, the refusal seems less heroic, but standards of honesty have changed. An English statesman of this generation would kick downstairs a man who made an offer such as Stanhope listened to graciously; but if he listened and deliberated, he refused at last. Many and perhaps most statesmen of that age would have accepted. "It is the only thing in the negotiation in which I have entirely failed," writes Dubois ruefully. But he was allowed to indulge in other courtesies. When ambassador to England in 1718, he writes the regent to send some of the choicest brands of champagne and burgundy. "The best and the strongest," says

[1] "Ce qu'il écouta gracieusement et sans se gendarmer."

[2] Dubois au régent, October 30, 1716.

the abbé, "and I supplicate your Royal Highness to have them selected by a connoisseur." Half of this was for the king, and half for Stanhope. The secretary could appreciate such a courtesy. Dubois describes one of the interviews in Hanover, which followed a dinner given by Stanhope to some Germans. The English minister declared that the ordeal had been severe. He had thirteen German guests, and they had consumed seventy bottles of wine, besides five or six of strong liquors. Still Stanhope was able to acquit himself honorably, even in an encounter of such gravity, and after the dinner was over he talked politics with Dubois for four hours. The abbé, who lived most abstemiously, wrote his master that wine extracted the truth even from the most taciturn.[1]

As the success of the negotiations was assured, Dubois began to receive the honors to which his victory entitled him. He again visited the Hague, but he no longer stopped at obscure taverns, in the disguise of an itinerant collector of pictures. He was made ambassador. He appeared in state. "I have bought six beautiful black mares," he writes with much glee. Dubois had waited long for the pomps of the world, and he enjoyed them thoroughly when at last he had secured them. He was nervously anxious at the delay in the final ratification of the treaty. "These delays have cost me more tears than would fill a pail," he wrote his master. This was not the style which the ambassadors of Louis XIV. used in their dispatches to the king, but it expressed the idea. At last the great work was done; the treaty was signed, the vision of future honors was already present to the abbé's ambition. "I signed at midnight," he writes the re-

[1] Dubois au régent, November 4, 1716.

gent; "I am happy to have been honored with your orders in a matter so important for your welfare, and I am more indebted for this mark of confidence than if you had made me a cardinal."[1]

Holland decided to join in the agreement which had been made between England and France, and on January 4, 1717, the treaty was signed at the Hague, which is known as the Triple Alliance. By this instrument the three states, in order to preserve their own tranquillity and the peace of Europe, guaranteed the observance of those articles of the peace of Utrecht by which the succession to the throne of Great Britain was confirmed in the Protestant line, in conformity with the acts of Parliament, and by which the succession to the crown of France was regulated. In other words, they confirmed the exclusion of Philip and his heirs from the French throne, and guaranteed the succession to the Duke of Orleans, if Louis XV. died without children. The powers agreed to furnish assistance in money and troops to any one of the three which should be attacked by any other state or prince.[2]

It was provided that the Pretender should not be allowed to reside in France, Lorraine, or Avignon, and that no one of the three countries would furnish an asylum to the fugitive rebels of the others. The works which had been begun at Mardyck were to be destroyed, or so changed that they could not be used for the refuge or equipment of ships of war. The provisions of this article, to which the English attached great importance, were regulated in minute detail.[3]

[1] Dubois au regent, January 4, 1717.

[2] A separate article between France and Holland limited this agreement to European possessions.

[3] The treaty in French is published in Dumont, *Corps Dip.*, viii. 484–488.

Before the final ratifications of the treaty were exchanged, the Pretender was requested to leave Avignon. He offered to go without resistance if the regent would promise to pay his debts, and this condition was at once accepted. On February 6, 1717, he abandoned Avignon, crossed the Alps, and sought refuge in Rome. There at last he was allowed to rest in peace.

The Triple Alliance changed the policy of France; she joined hands with a country which was regarded as an hereditary enemy; as a result of the alliance, French armies within two years were marching against a Bourbon king of Spain. Such a measure was loudly condemned by those who were imbued with the political principles of Louis XIV. It is still condemned by many French historians as an abandonment of the legitimate policy of France. It would seem to be supposed that some law of nature required that France should always be hostile to England, and that she should forever waste her substance in order to further the interests of any prince who had the blood of Louis XIV. in his veins.

The Triple Alliance, like any other political measure, must be judged by its results. What France needed was peace. She had no interests of her own to be subserved by war; and yet it is probable that if she had remained isolated in Europe, she would soon have been embroiled with some of her neighbors. The Triple Alliance was sufficiently strong to secure peace and to enforce it. The Emperor was obliged to abandon his hopes of stirring up a new war, by which he might gain more of the possessions of Spain. Philip V., after an insignificant contest, was obliged to abandon his designs for a war by which

he might recover from Austria some of what she had already taken. The policy of both these countries was to claim everything, and to concede nothing. Both were compelled to accept the terms of the treaty of Utrecht, and to leave Europe for a little while at peace. France had an opportunity to enjoy the increasing prosperity which lay before her during the eighteenth century.

Undoubtedly, his personal interests led Orleans to seek the friendship of England. In this there was no wrong. If Louis XV. died leaving no male descendants, the throne of France had been secured to Orleans by a treaty to which all the great powers of Europe were parties, and by the solemn renunciation of Philip V. It was as proper for him to protect his rights in France, as for the house of Hanover to protect its rights in England. He could justly claim that his interests and those of the French nation were identical. His accession to the throne would have been viewed with approval by the nations of Europe; it would not have involved France in war; it would have saved the land from the rule of a sickly and bigoted imbecile like Philip V.

A sentimental cry was raised that the Duke of Orleans had abandoned the Stuart cause, that he refused the hospitality of France to Catholic and legitimate princes. It was a sufficient answer to such laments that the regent only followed in the footsteps of that bulwark of monarchy and Catholicism, Louis XIV. By the treaty of Utrecht, Louis had promised to expel the Stuart princes from France, to give them no further aid nor comfort, to recognize the Protestant succession to the English throne. He had wisely agreed to these terms in order to obtain peace for his

country. The regent cannot be blamed for consenting to conditions similar to those embodied in the great treaty which closed the war of the Spanish Succession.

There was, indeed, a difference in the manner in which the provisions of the two treaties were performed. Torcy and the other ministers of Louis XIV. continued their intrigues with the Jacobites. They pursued the fallacious policy of trying to force a Catholic king upon a Protestant nation, — a policy which for twenty-five years had been a failure, and which had helped to involve France in disaster and disgrace. They acted in bad faith, and Orleans and Dubois acted in good faith. The policy of the regent was both more honest and more wise. "If you furnish an army to the Pretender," wrote Dubois to his master, "what is the result? A war where you will encounter all the ancient enemies of France, and will have for allies a handful of Jacobites, who conspire better than they fight." These were words of wisdom, and the French people had reason to be grateful to Orleans that he decided to heed them.

Not only did Orleans make friends with England, said the enemies of the treaty, but he neglected the true interests of France; he abandoned the Spanish alliance; he lost the fruits of thirteen years of war which France had endured in order to place a Bourbon on the throne of Spain. A century and a half later we find a judicious historian like Martin declaring that the regent, for his selfish interests, overthrew the policy of Richelieu and Louis XIV. and chained France to England.[1] Such expressions can only be explained by the tendency to accept without examina-

[1] *Histoire de France*, xv. 122.

tion what has often been said. An alliance with Spain had been no part of the policy of Richelieu. War had raged between the two countries during almost the whole of his administration. No more had it been the policy of Louis XIV. He had constantly been at variance with the Spanish kings. The boundaries of France had been enlarged from the spoils of the Spanish monarchy. Because a Bourbon king had been established on the Spanish throne, was France necessarily to find her true interest in a perpetual union with that country? The facts of history are the best answer. The fifteen years during which Louis XIV. had Spain for an ally were the most disastrous years of his reign. Under Fleury an alliance was again made with Spain, and the interests of France were imperiled in the endeavor to obtain advantages for the children of the Spanish queen. Later in the century Spain had increased in strength, and was a more important factor in the politics of Europe than under Philip V. Yet what did France gain by the famous family compact? She gave away Louisiana to console her ally for the losses which it suffered. An alliance with Spain always proved an incubus to France, and history furnishes no record of anything which she ever gained by it.

It would have been impossible for the regent to have had Philip V. as a friend, no matter how much he might have desired such a result. Philip regarded Orleans as a future rival to the French throne; he entertained for him the hatred of a dull man for a clever man, of a bigot for a free-thinker. At the beginning of his administration the regent made advances to Spain, but he met with no encouragement. His ambassador was informed that Spain no longer

needed the counsels of France, that the king of Spain desired himself to enjoy the liberty which he allowed to others.[1]

Philip V. was a man superstitious in belief, false in heart, and feeble in intellect. His wife was a shrew, whose only passion was a fierce affection for her offspring, as blind and as cruel as that of some wild beast.[2] It was impossible to make any union with them, except by involving France in perpetual wars with half of Europe, in order to obtain for the Spanish king the provinces which he coveted but was not powerful enough to conquer.

Nor was the idea of an English alliance any startling innovation in French politics. The sagacity of Mazarin had obtained England as an ally, and by her help he had brought a long war with Spain to a successful termination. Louis XIV. had been the ally of England almost without intermission, until William III. mounted the throne. The change of dynasty did not forbid such a policy for the future. The Georges were not possessed of the crusading ardor of William against France. An alliance with England was not a departure from the policy by which France had grown great. All that Orleans abandoned of the traditions of France was the insane delusion which, for twenty-five years, had identified the glory of that country with the restoration of the Stuarts. The chief enemies of the Triple Alliance were those whose rabid Catholicism had already done so much harm. The alliance with England secured peace and prosperity.

[1] St. Aignon to king, February 3, 1716.

[2] Dodington wrote Stanhope, in 1716, that the absolute control of Spanish policy would belong to the highest bidder for the queen's sons.

The wars with England later in the century entailed the loss of a foreign empire.

The regent consented to abandon the works at Mardyck, but this was carrying out the conditions of the treaty of Utrecht, by which Dunkirk was to be dismantled. An exaggerated importance was attached to this provision, but Lille had been restored to France as compensation for it, and it should have been executed in good faith.

It is a curious illustration of the manner in which Dubois and all his works were reviled, that even the wording of the treaty has been the subject of the most unmeasured condemnation. In the duplicate of the treaty kept by the English, George was described as king of Great Britain and France, while Louis XV. was designated as the most Christian king. Indignant patriots have declared that the heir of Louis XIV. was not even allowed the use of his own name.[1] Notwithstanding the eminence of the historians who have repeated this charge, it would not have been advanced by any one who had been at the trouble of reading the wording of prior treaties between France and England. In precisely this form they had been drawn, not only at the peace of Utrecht, but in treaties made between Louis XIV. and Charles II. when the latter was the pensioner of the former. In this manner the protocol of the duplicate in Latin was always expressed. The French copy gave the name of the French monarch first, and described both him and his English brother by their real and not by their imaginary titles. In the body of all these treaties the French monarch was uniformly described as the most Christian king. When Dubois was supposed to be lowering the dignity

[1] See both Lémontey and Martin.

of France at the behest of a foreign state whose pensioner he was, he was only following the precedents authorized by the most powerful and the most punctilious king that ever sat on the French throne.[1]

The criticisms on the form, as well as on the substance, of the treaty by which the Triple Alliance was made, seem destitute of good ground. The prince who ratified it may have been an unprincipled libertine, the abbé who framed it may have been an unscrupulous adventurer, but the policy which it established was for the true interests of France.

[1] This subject is discussed at length, and with a thorough knowledge of the question, in the work of M. Wiesener. It is not important, except as it illustrates the manner in which many of the criticisms on Dubois and the regent were made by those who were not willing to be at the trouble of familiarizing themselves with the facts.

CHAPTER XII.

THE QUADRUPLE ALLIANCE AND WAR WITH SPAIN.

1718–1720.

THE establishment of a Bourbon prince on the throne of Spain was regarded as the great and final achievement of the reign of Louis XIV. The critics of the regent denounced his failure to act in harmony with that sovereign as the unpardonable error of his administration. It is well, therefore, to consider the character and the policy of the grandson of Louis XIV., who for forty-six years reigned in Spain, exercising an authority uncontrolled either by popular or by aristocratic institutions.

Philip was a youth of seventeen when he was chosen as king of that country by the will of Charles II. Intellectually, he was less developed than befitted his years; of education he had not so much as most boys of ten possess now; in will, in the power to impress himself on men, to control the policy of the great people whom he was called upon to rule, he was deficient to an extraordinary degree; and in all these respects he was much the same when he died, an old man of sixty-three, as when he mounted the throne, a lad of seventeen.

Such a youth was necessarily controlled by those by whom he was surrounded, and Louis XIV. was obliged to give careful attention to their choice, in order to

exercise any influence on the affairs of Spain. It was in vain that he wrote his grandson that he must learn to exert his own volition, to be able to say, "I will." The letters of Louis XIV. to the young king were as judicious as they were kindly, but they were without effect upon the prince to whom they were addressed. Philip continued, however, submissive to the orders which he received. Sometimes he was sullen in his obedience, but he never ventured to disobey his grandfather when the commands were peremptory. He retained also an affection for France and the French, but such a feeling was of small importance in so weak a person. The confidential adviser of his early career wrote: "One could make him sign a league against France with the same facility that he would sign a passport." [1]

In this feeble character there was one strong passion, but it served only to render the sovereign still more dependent and despicable. He was the most uxorious of men. The most ingenious of comic writers have been unable to portray a condition of marital dependence equal to that of the monarch of the most widely extended empire in the world. The henpecked husband whom we find in fiction appears a man of independent will and fearless character when compared with Philip V. of Spain. His first wife was a woman of sprightliness and capacity. In ruling the kingdom, she found some consolation for a life every moment of which, by day and night, was spent in the society of a taciturn and stupid man. Philip was weak enough to be governed by his wife, and weak enough to be coaxed by others into trying to escape from this subjection. One of the French ambassadors

[1] Louville to Torcy, April 30, 1701.

conceived the idea of establishing relations with the Spanish king, of which his female rulers should have no knowledge. Philip sent communications to his grandfather, which were prepared by him and the minister. In these he expressed what he thought were his actual desires. He also sent the ordinary formal letters, which were dictated by his wife, or by Mme. des Ursins when she was in Spain. "Do not put any confidence in the official letters which I shall be obliged to send you, in order not to disturb the peace," wrote this most weakly of princes.[1]

Louis XIV. had the feelings of a king and of a gentleman, and the spectacle of his grandson confessing that he dared not express his real sentiments, because he was afraid of a disturbance with his wife, was in the highest degree distateful to him.[2] He knew Philip's character well enough, also, to be sure that this feeble attempt at independence would be short-lived. So it proved. The surreptitious correspondence was discovered. The penalties imposed upon the erring husband are a secret of state, but they were doubtless severe. During the forty years that Philip remained a king, he never again ventured to rebel against the authority of his wives. He now sent a formal recantation of all that he had said in his personal letters, and was forgiven.[3] The correspondence is a curious illustration of the character of those whom the fortune of birth sometimes puts in great places.

In tracing the policy of Philip V. as a ruler, we are naturally obliged to consider the sequence of his wives.

[1] Philip to Louis XIV., January 13, 1705.
[2] Louis to Philip, February 1, 1705.
[3] Philip to Louis, March 10, 1705.

His first wife, who was a princess of Savoy, died in February, 1714. In June, he was affianced to a princess of Parma. In September, he was married to her by proxy, and he was greatly distressed at the delays in her journey to Spain. On December 24, she at last reached her impatient spouse. A week later the French *chargé d'affaires* could truly write, "The queen governs the king despotically."[1] The authority which she acquired in the honeymoon she never allowed to relax. Her arrival was accompanied by an entire change in the government. She dismissed Mme. des Ursins, without even consulting Philip, and the king dared show no resentment.[2] He earned her favor by implicit obedience to her commands.[3] His life with the new queen was spent in the same manner as with the former one. An existence more monotonous, and apparently more wearisome, could hardly be conceived. It was a perpetual *tête-à-tête* by day and night, with no variation from the 1st of January to the 31st of December. Sickness of whatever nature was not allowed to be an excuse for separation. Their Catholic majesties rose together, dressed together, rode together, ate their meals together, went to mass together, said their prayers together. The queen was allowed a few moments to herself during her toilet and for her confession. Even that must be brief. The king waited in the next room, and, if he thought that she was occupying too much time in the confession of her sins, he opened the door and called to her.

[1] Pachau à Torcy, December 31, 1714.

[2] Orry à Torcy, January 5, 1715.

[3] Even Torcy, who favored Philip's claims to the French throne, writes: "It is to be hoped that the king will fall into proper hands, it is so easy to abuse his goodness." — Torcy to St. Aignan, April 8, 1715.

Almost every day the king played at the mall. Three times he went down the long mall in his game, and three times he returned, never more and never less. Though the queen took no part in the sport, she was required to follow him and keep constantly at his left hand. If, in talking with some one, she fell behind even four or five paces, Philip at once turned round and looked at her, and she hastened to resume her place.

Every day, also, the king and queen participated in what was most improperly styled the chase. Hunting, when it requires exercise and skill, and still more when there exists an element of danger for the hunter as well as the hunted, is a sport the manliness of which atones for any appearance of cruelty. It was far otherwise with the butchery which furnished the daily amusement of Philip V. He and his wife were driven to the rendezvous. In the mean time three or four hundred peasants scoured the woods, and drove before them the game of every kind with which these were filled. In due time animals of various sorts began to pass before the inclosure where the king and queen were stationed, and they fired at them as they went by. Nothing came amiss, — boars, wolves, deer, hares, foxes, martins. Some were killed; many more were wounded, and crept off in the woods to die. An hour spent in butchering barnyard fowl would have been quite as enlivening and manly sport, but, such as this was, it furnished endless delight to the Spanish king.[1]

[1] The best authority for the detail of Philip's life is St. Simon, who was an ambassador at Madrid, and who always describes with equal accuracy and vividness what he saw with his own eyes. But the routine of Philip's life was almost as well known as that of Louis XIV., and is described in most of the corre-

Philip's religious nature was as narrow and superstitious as we might expect. His confessor was his constant confidant: to him he disclosed the petty doubts and fears which disturbed him; how should he say his prayers on St. Elizabeth's Day; what ceremonial must he follow on the octave of the dedication of the Holy Trinity; at what moment should he begin fasting; at what moment should he cease praying? Such questions, solemnly reduced to writing, were daily presented to his confessor, and have been preserved for posterity.[1] The confessor, who was a sensible man, told him that it was not alone prayers and penitence which made a saintly king; that, if he would occupy himself with the duties of royalty, he could accomplish more for God's glory than did many preachers and missionaries.[2] Such advice was unheeded. Philip was in constant fear of dying, and often he insisted on keeping his confessor by him all the night. Frequently he awoke, and at once demanded ghostly counsel on some doubt that had traversed his feeble brain. At one time he was so apprehensive of the administration of a secret charm or poison, that his attendants had endless trouble to induce him to change his clothes or his linen.[3] The description which St. Simon gives of Philip in 1721 does not seem strange, when we consider the life which he had led for twenty years. He was bent and shrunken; his chin projected, his gait was a shuffle, his speech was a drawl, and his appearance imbecile.[4]

spondence of the time. See letters of St. Aignan and the other French ambassadors at Madrid.

[1] They are still preserved among the archives of Alcala.

[2] *Direccion que practicaba S. M. Arch. Alcala.*

[3] St. Aignan à Huxelles, September and October, 1717.

[4] St. Simon, xvii. 350.

Such was the prince to place whom on the throne of Spain half a million Frenchmen perished. The treasury was bankrupt, the fields lay untilled, trade was stagnant, misery was widespread; and all this that a grandson of Louis XIV. might reign at Madrid with as little profit to Spain as to France. What an enormous price to pay, and what a beggarly reward to receive!

Philip's second wife possessed a character as vigorous as his was weak. She was a woman without experience in affairs of state, her mind was narrow and suspicious; but she had an active intelligence, untiring energy, and unusual power of will.[1] Two sons by Philip's first wife were living. The second wife also had children. There seemed slight probability that they would inherit the Spanish crown, and her energies were occupied in finding thrones and principalities for them elsewhere. For that end she had no more hesitation in involving Spain and all Europe in war than has a tigress in killing a fawn for her cubs. The establishment of the sons of Elizabeth of Parma controlled the politics of Spain for quarter of a century; it wasted many lives, and produced endless disturbance in Europe.

Elizabeth may have been entitled to demand advantages for her offspring as compensation for the existence which she was forced to lead. A lifelong *tête-à-tête* with such a man as Philip must have been misery equal to that caused by the most refined and ingenious tortures of the Inquisition. In company Philip rarely opened his mouth, and with his wife he would sit for

[1] "She has the heart of Lombardy and the wit of Florence," writes the Prince of Monaco to Torcy; "Elle veut très fortement." — October 19, 1714.

hours in silence. When he did talk, it was of the chase, of his clothes and those of his children. And yet, in order to hold her ascendency, the queen was obliged to keep him always in her view. Sometimes she would not even let him confess in secret. He loved flattery, and she praised him constantly. She lauded his skill at the mall, his presence, his dress; she even told him how intelligent he was, and how great a king.[1] A resolute woman hesitates at nothing. Though Philip's character was feeble, it was not difficult to induce him to plunge his country into war. He had a certain vague ambition, a desire to be regarded as a powerful king, and he was as unscrupulous as monarchs who possessed greater ability. While he waked his confessor at night to get instructions as to the order of his devotions, he had no regard for the treaties he signed, or the oaths he swore; and he pursued with a stubborn pertinacity his plans for obtaining anything which he desired. His readiness to plunge Spain and France in war to accomplish his purposes, if he had been an able man, would have made him a dangerous man.

In order to conclude the peace of Utrecht, Louis had compelled his grandson to execute a renunciation of his rights as a possible heir to the French throne. It was asserted by those who opposed the treaty then, and by those who have condemned it since, that this renunciation was invalid. When the English ministers demanded it as a condition of peace, Torcy had replied that in France it was a fundamental law that the nearest heir received the throne, not from the preceding king, but directly from God, and that this divine ordi-

[1] See *Mémoires de St. Simon*, xvii. and xviii., during his embassy at Madrid.

nance no renunciation could affect, and only God could alter.[1] This position was nonsensical, and Torcy knew it quite as well as Bolingbroke. The argument was advanced to make the English desist from a demand to which Louis was reluctant to accede. There was no such law in France. Even if there had been, Bolingbroke's answer was complete, that, though God gave a prince the right to inherit, there was no law that prevented his surrender of the right; even the most strenuous advocates did not claim that the law of God forbade a king to abdicate. But in France there had never been any positive enactment such as Torcy claimed, nor had there been an immemorial usage which should take the place of written law. If the throne of France by God's decree must always descend in a direct line, Louis XIV. was an usurper. Carlovingian and Merovingian sovereigns had been dethroned; they had partitioned the territory of France among themselves to suit their own tastes; the Bourbons were not the lawful heirs of those who had once ruled in that land. Even if Louis XIV. was a lawful sovereign, it was certain that Philip V. was not. He was king of Spain by virtue of the renunciation of his father and his older brother. If Torcy was correct, that a prince could not deprive his offspring of their rights by birth, then the infant Louis XV. was manifestly entitled to the throne of Spain as well as of France, and the renunciations by which Philip had been placed on it were contrary to the law of God, and void.[2] Philip had secured his rights in

[1] Torcy to Bolingbroke, March 22, 1712; to Bonnac, April 4, 1712.

[2] This argument was used by Louis XIV. when he was endeavoring to persuade Philip to sign the renunciation to the

Spain as a compensation for yielding his possible rights in France.

Though the renunciation of the Duke of Anjou was valid by the laws of France, as well as by the laws of common sense and common honesty, yet it was very doubtful whether it would be observed. A similar doubt enveloped every treaty that was made. The fact that sovereigns violated their agreements with facility could be obviated by no skill in the framers of treaties. A humorous diplomat had suggested that to each of the elaborate phrases, in which the renunciation of Philip was couched, should be added the words, "In the same manner as was expressed in the renunciation of Maria Theresa," in violation of which Philip was now on the Spanish throne.

Louis XIV. regarded the instrument executed by the king of Spain as in all respects valid, and he was distressed when Philip, notwithstanding his scruples of conscience as to fasts and formulas, declared that he would not respect his oaths or his agreements. "I am sure that you regret giving occasion to the charges that you are seeking pretexts to avoid the renunciation to which you have solemnly sworn," he wrote his grandson.[1]

The only check upon Philip was removed when his grandfather died. He had long regarded the Duke of Orleans with animosity. During the war of the Succession, Orleans for some years commanded the armies in Spain. When Louis XIV. believed that it was impossible that Philip could retain the Spanish

French throne. "Il ne doit point avoir de peine à suivre l'exemple de ceux qui l'ont placé sur la trône." — Louis à Bonnac, April 28, 1712.

[1] Louis to Philip, August 14, 1714.

throne, Orleans became involved in some indiscreet intrigues, founded on his own contingent rights if Philip were compelled to abdicate. There was nothing in what he did contrary to his obligations to that sovereign, but his conduct was injudicious.[1] Mme. des Ursins conceived a strong dislike for Orleans, and Philip disliked what she disliked. Subsequent events had only strengthened his aversion. At last Orleans obtained the regency, which Philip wanted for himself. He entertained for the regent both hatred and fear. His terrors were increased by the reports of Orleans's crimes which were sent from Paris. Philip was easily led to believe that the wicked cousin, who had already poisoned his brother, was now seeking an opportunity to poison him.

A new favorite had attained to power in Spain, and for four years controlled the destinies of that country. Giulio Alberoni, like so many of those who have reached the highest dignities of the church, was of very humble extraction. He was an Italian, born near Piacenza, and was the son of a gardener. He took orders, obtained the good-will of the Duke of Vendôme, and in 1711, as his secretary, first visited Spain. Two years later he was appointed consular agent for the Duke of Parma, whose subject he was. He used his influence to induce Mme. des Ursins to choose the niece of that duke as Philip's second wife; and when Elizabeth Farnese had arrived in Spain, and established her wifely authority over her husband, the road lay clear for Alberoni's advancement. He was of the same nationality as the queen; he had helped her to

[1] All the documents and evidence in reference to this chapter of Orleans's life can be found in Baudrillart, *Philippe V. et la Cour de France*, t. ii. ch. i.

the position which she held; he enjoyed her entire confidence. He soon became the prime minister of Spain, and exercised in that country a despotic authority. To the rule of a French princess succeeded the rule of an Italian priest. Spain seemed to be unable to supply men from her own soil who could play any part in the state. Alberoni desired to be made a cardinal, and the influence of Spain was exercised to procure him this honor. Clement XI. hesitated. So unfit did he regard Alberoni for the purple, that he said he should undoubtedly burn in hell if he made him a cardinal. Even if the Pope entertained such gloomy apprehensions, he decided to run the risk. In July, 1717, Alberoni was declared a cardinal, and this dignity increased the influence which he already possessed.

Alberoni has often been likened to Dubois. Both had risen from a very humble social position, both were violent and vulgar in their speech and manner, both were eager and unscrupulous in pursuing their own advancement, and both attained the highest dignities of the church and state. The analogy cannot be carried further. Dubois was a man of sagacity; no one considered more carefully than he the condition of the states and the character of the men with whom he had to deal; no one was more adroit in persuading others to adopt his own conclusions. Alberoni possessed the reverse of these qualities.

He has been compared with statesmen like Richelieu and Mazarin; it has been said that under favorable circumstances he might have rebuilt the power of Spain, and accomplished results as brilliant as those effected by the great French cardinals. No comparison could be more inaccurate. The essential quality

of a statesman is to recognize what is possible, to abide the fitting hour, to seize the opportunity of to-day and watch for the opportunity of the morrow. But Alberoni was a dreamer. His political schemes were as impracticable as those of his royal master. Like a petulant child, he refused the advantages which he could obtain, because they were not all that he desired. He was always hoping for some mysterious turn of affairs. He devised vast political combinations, which came to naught; he hoped to conquer England with a few thousand ill-equipped troops, to overthrow the authority of the regent by means of a handful of discontented intriguers. He failed in everything that he undertook, because he would never recognize that the world was what it was, and not what he wished it to be. Alberoni claimed great credit for himself because he organized in Spain a considerable navy and army, because he did something to rouse that country from its lethargy. But all that he accomplished by his energy he destroyed by his folly.[1]

The cardinal stimulated all the vague, ambitious hopes which agitated Philip's brain. The plans of the feeble king and his chimerical minister would have required the power of Louis XIV. in his palmiest days to have any chance of accomplishment. All the provisions of the treaty of Utrecht were odious to them, and they were eager to overthrow the arrangement by which, only three years before, the peace of Europe had been made and the crown of Philip assured. Spain must recover her lost possessions in Italy; Gibraltar must be restored; Parma and Tus-

[1] "E uomo di talento, ma non da ministro, perche violente, sdrucciolo e senza prudenza," said an Italian diplomat who knew him well. — *Relazione di Lascaris.*

cany must be secured for the son of Elizabeth Farnese. It would have been impossible for the most powerful state in Europe to obtain such advantages, and they were not likely to be accorded to one of the weakest.

An unfriendly policy towards the regent accorded with the prejudices of Philip and the plans of Alberoni. A new treaty was made with England, by which she secured great commercial advantages. On the other hand, French trade and French merchants were harassed. They were subjected to heavier impositions than when Spain was governed by kings of the house of Austria. The French ambassador remonstrated, but without success. At the same time, engineers were employed to repair the fortifications on the line of the Pyrenees towards France, which had been suffered to fall into decay.[1] Such was the spectacle presented within three months of the death of Louis XIV. to those who believed that ties of blood governed the policy of princes, and that the Pyrenees no longer existed. Orleans sent to Madrid the Marquis of Louville, who had formerly been an intimate associate of the Duke of Anjou, but Alberoni was too wary to allow the king to be exposed to the blandishments of a friend of his youth. Louville was met with letters, purporting to be by Philip's order, but of the existence of which the sovereign was perhaps unaware, which directed him to return forthwith to France. It was with difficulty that he found a physician to attend him in an illness, such was the apprehension of any relations with a man who was distasteful to the queen and her minister.[2]

[1] See letters of St. Aignan to regent and to Huxelles, October and November, 1715 ; *Papiers de Torcy*, i. 29 *et pas.*

[2] See letters of Louville, July and August, 1716, *Aff. Etr. Esp.; Papiers de Torcy*, t. i.

Baffled in his attempts to remain on good terms with Philip, the regent joined the Triple Alliance. The assertion in the treaty that this alliance was made to secure the tranquillity of Europe was no idle boast. "Your voyage to the Hague, Monsieur l'Abbé," said Stanhope to Dubois, when the instrument was signed, "has saved the waste of human life. There are nations who will be indebted to you for their tranquillity, though they do not know it." In pursuance of a policy that was alike judicious and humane, the endeavor was now made to adjust the points of contention between Austria and Spain, and to prevent the recklessness of Philip and Alberoni from kindling a European war.

Spain had already taken the first step towards an appeal to the sword. Alberoni constantly declared that the Austrians must be driven from Italy.[1] Such a purpose would have been deserving of sympathy, if the object of freeing Italy from the burden of Austrian occupation had not been to subject her to the incubus of Spanish occupation. Any consideration for national interests, or affinities, or sympathies was unknown to the politics of this period. Such ideas were so foreign to political conceptions that they were not even advanced as pretexts. "They cut and pare states and kingdoms as if they were Dutch cheeses," wrote Alberoni of the statesmen of the day.[2] "After all," said the regent to Stair, "what does the nation amount to?" "Very little," replied the ambassador, "until a standard is raised."[3] The standard was not raised until late in the century.

[1] *Papiers de Torcy, passim.*

[2] Alberoni to Dodington, April 16, 1718. The policy of which he complains in this letter was also his own.

[3] *Aff. Etr. Esp., Mém. et Doc.*, 135.

The Spanish had long been preparing a naval force of considerable strength. It was certain that an expedition was contemplated in some direction, but the real object was concealed, for Alberoni had the faculty of keeping his own counsel. To the Pope he intimated that the fleet would sail against the Turks, so soon as a cardinal's hat was bestowed on a minister who had it in his power to do good work for the cause of Christ. In August, 1717, the fleet set sail. It did not proceed against the infidels, but nine thousand men landed on the island of Sardinia, which had been ceded to Austria by the treaty of Utrecht. The Emperor was engaged in a war with the Turks, his Italian possessions were scantily garrisoned, and the Spanish captured the island without difficulty.

Thus the war between Spain and the empire was again kindled, and it seemed probable that all the parties to the contest of the Spanish Succession would soon find themselves in arms. The admirers of Alberoni have claimed that he was opposed to commencing hostilities, but was forced to begin war at the express command of the Spanish king. The cardinal's letters and conversations support this claim.[1] But those who suppose that Philip V. was capable of insisting upon so important a measure, contrary to the wishes of his minister, are ignorant of his physical and mental condition. His health at this period was more infirm than usual, and during the autumn his life was in danger. Alberoni had long been strengthening the Spanish army and preparing a fleet; he was not a man who, like the father of Frederick II., equipped soldiers for

[1] See especially his letter to the Duke of Popoli of June 10, 1717, which is so often regarded as decisive as to Alberoni's wishes.

the pleasure of looking at them. In June, Alberoni wrote a strong letter declaring that Spain was not ready for war. In this he was sincere. He had not yet been elevated to the cardinalate, and he knew that the Pope would be mortally offended when he discovered that the Spanish expedition was intended for Italian invasion. On July 12, Alberoni was made a cardinal, and early in August the fleet sailed for Sardinia.

The hostile measures taken by Spain increased the desire of England and France to secure the continuance of peace. In September, 1717, Dubois was sent as ambassador to London. His mission was accompanied with important political results; his letters illustrate, also, many of his own peculiarities. He was charmed with England. "There is no other country in the world," he writes, "where one can see so many pretty women." [1] He was equally impressed by the populousness of London. The Pont-Neuf, he said, seemed like a solitude in comparison. The abbé was always eager to make friends, and he scorned no means of obtaining their favor. He ordered dresses for many of the ladies of the court. He describes the complexion, the height, the figure, even the color of the hair, of those for whom they were intended; he directs, with anxious attention, the manner in which the trains should be finished. Nor did he give less attention to his larder, that he might furnish pleasure to the husbands as well as to the wives. Perigord truffles were ordered, cheeses from Brie, and marmalades of extraordinary delicacy. His cook fell sick, and he was in despair. The names were sent of candidates for the office, and he criticises them with a

[1] Cited in Aubertin, *L'Esprit publique au dix-huitième siècle.*

severity befitting the gravity of the situation. "You speak of the cook of M. d'Armenonville, but M. d'Armenonville did not understand good living. His brother, the Bishop of Orleans, lived on salsify. It is impossible that a good officer should be turned out from that school."[1]

A minister who was diligent in small matters did not neglect those of more importance. The regent was earnest in demanding for Spain the advantages which might reasonably content its sovereign. The English sought to reconcile the Emperor to the treaty of Utrecht, against which he had so bitterly protested. The negotiation was long protracted, but at last it was agreed between France and England that the Emperor must acknowledge Philip as king of Spain, and Philip must surrender any claim upon the possessions ceded to Austria; in consideration for this, Don Carlos, Philip's son by Elizabeth Farnese, should be recognized as heir to the duchies of Tuscany and Parma, and Sicily should be ceded to Austria by the Duke of Savoy, who was to receive Sardinia in exchange. The Spanish must, of course, withdraw their troops from Sardinia and agree to keep the peace.[2]

These terms were reasonable. England and France asked no advantages for themselves; they sought only to preserve the tranquillity of Europe. But an arrangement that was fair to each party was distaste-

[1] Letters cited by Aubertin.

[2] These negotiations can be followed in the correspondence between Dubois, the regent, and Huxelles, preserved in the *Archives des Affaires Etrangères.* The history of the Quadruple Alliance, from the Austrian archives, has been written by Weber, *Die Quadrupel Allianz, vom Jahre* 1718. Equally valuable information is found in *Papiers de Torcy,* MSS. Bib. Nat.

ful to Spain and to Austria. The Emperor proposed an alliance with France, to be purchased by the surrender of Alsace to Germany; he was willing to treat with England, if Majorca and Sicily could be secured for him, without allowing Tuscany to fall to the lot of a Bourbon prince. It was with reluctance that he would agree to renounce the title of king of Spain, though it was as visionary as if he had called himself the king of Jerusalem.[1] Dealing with these unreasonable demands was not an easy task, but it was successfully accomplished.

The secret council at Vienna displayed an unusual amount of sagacity. The minutes of its proceedings recite that, in the hope of getting more by waiting longer, Austria had suffered serious disadvantages at the successive treaties of Nimeguen, Ryswick, and Utrecht.[2] It was thought wise, therefore, not to delay in entering an alliance which secured the fertile island of Sicily in exchange for the barren island of Sardinia. In July, 1718, an agreement was signed between France and England. Austria became a party to it in August, Holland subsequently joined; and it thus became the Quadruple Alliance.[3]

Spain was asked to accede to the terms agreed

[1] Protokoll der Conferenz-Sitzung vom 2 Februar, 1716; kaiserliches Rescript an Hoffman vom 26 Juni, 1715, cited by Weber.

[2] Weber, 31.

[3] The treaty is found in Dumont, viii. 531. The credit for the successful termination of these protracted negotiations belongs chiefly to Stanhope and Dubois. One is surprised to find in the correspondence that St. Simon was then a zealous partisan of Dubois. "He told me you could be sure of his devotion," writes Chavigny. It was probably when Dubois as cardinal took precedence of the duke, that St. Simon discovered how wicked a man he was.

upon by the four great powers. Even if they had been less favorable, it was useless for her to oppose them. Spain could not have resisted such a combination in the days of Philip II., and it was folly to suppose that she could do so in the condition to which she had fallen under Philip V. But the terms of the treaty were such as could properly have been accepted. The inheritance of the duchies of Tuscany and Parma was secured to a Bourbon prince, the son of the Spanish queen. In their eagerness to avoid war, George I. and his ministers were willing to surrender Gibraltar, which had been captured fourteen years before. Spain could have escaped the humiliation of seeing the English flag over the stronghold where it still floats, almost two centuries later.[1] That country could have pursued her course of material improvement, could have continued to strengthen her army and her navy, until she might have assumed a position in Europe not in all respects inferior to that which she formerly occupied. It was necessary to abandon the dream of reconquering the possessions surrendered by the treaty of Utrecht. But that was only a dream. The increased prosperity of Spain was largely due to the fact that she was relieved from the care of distant provinces which had cost her much and yielded little.[2] It is the conclusive proof of Alberoni's incompetency that he let this opportunity go by, and wasted the resources

[1] The willingness of George and Stanhope to surrender Gibraltar as a condition of peace appears beyond question in the letters published by Coxe and in Stanhope's *History of England*, as well as in the French diplomatic correspondence. — Letters of the regent, and *Papiers de Torcy*. Stanhope seems always to have thought that Gibraltar cost more than it was worth.

[2] Dodington to Stanhope, February 19, 1716, cited by Coxe.

which the country had acquired in a hopeless struggle after impossible chimeras.

The offers of the allied powers were met with the gasconade which was so common in Spanish diplomacy. His master, said Alberoni, would lose forty crowns before he would agree to terms so humiliating: rather than consent to them, he would die fighting, sword in hand.[1] Nancré, the French ambassador, urged the acceptance of conditions which were for the true interests of Spain. "Nancré has vomited out his proposals," wrote Alberoni. "They were scandalous enough to be worthy of an Englishman."[2]

Undisturbed by the combination already formed against him, the cardinal now attacked, without notice or provocation, a nation with which Spain was at peace. The Spanish proceeded, with utter unconcern as to consequences, to seize anything they wanted, no matter to whom it belonged. Sicily had been ceded to Savoy by the treaty of Utrecht. In August, 1718, a Spanish fleet sailed to that island, 30,000 soldiers landed, and the principal towns were easily captured. Such an invasion seemed so extraordinary that it was universally believed that a secret alliance had been made between Philip and the king of Sicily. It was not the fact. When Victor Amadeus found himself deserted by his former allies, he sought to form a combination with Spain, but the plans of Alberoni were too chimerical to attract him. The invasion of Sicily now drove him into the Quadruple Alliance. It was rarely that the house of Savoy made a treaty by which it lost. To exchange fertile and populous Sicily for rocky and barren Sardinia was a bad bargain, but

[1] Nancré to regent, April 26, 1718; *Papiers de Torcy, pas.*

[2] Alberoni to Cellamare, April 16, 1718; *Papiers de Torcy.*

Victor Amadeus saw that resistance was impossible. He never forgave those who had framed the alliance, and found his only consolation subsequently, when the three men most responsible for it — Stanhope, Dubois, and Orleans — died suddenly, and without opportunity to save themselves from perdition by obtaining absolution for their sins.

The invasion of Sicily compelled the allies to resort to force. An English fleet sailed under Admiral Byng, with orders to resist any infraction of the neutrality of Italy and the provisions of the treaty of Utrecht. His instructions were communicated to Alberoni. The cardinal treated the English fleet as he treated everything that conflicted with his desires: he paid no attention to it. With true Spanish hauteur, the English minister was informed that the Chevalier Byng might execute the orders that he had received from his master.[1] He proceeded to do so without delay. On the 11th of August, Byng attacked the Spanish off Cape Passaro. A few hours were sufficient to destroy the fleet with which Alberoni had expected to rule the Mediterranean. The visions of Italian conquest were dissolved as soon as they were brought in contact with realities.

Alberoni still persisted in a desperate struggle, trusting to fortune to come to his aid. He had hoped that Charles XII. of Sweden would invade England in behalf of the Stuart cause. The death of that erratic sovereign put an end to such plans, and the cardinal decided to revive the projects of Philip II. and undertake the conquest of England himself. In 1719, a fleet of twenty-four sail, mostly transports, was dispatched to conquer the greatest maritime power of

[1] Note of July 15, 1718, signed by Alberoni.

Europe. A storm off Finisterre dispersed the new Armada, and saved it from the defeat which awaited it.

In December, 1718, England formally declared war upon Spain, and Stanhope demanded of the regent to do the same.[1] Orleans had bound himself to this by the provisions of the Quadruple Alliance, but he was loath to take the step. He desired the regency to be a period of peace, and a contest with Spain was in the highest degree unpopular in France. The coterie which cherished the traditions of Louis XIV. regarded a war against his grandson as an impious and a fratricidal measure. Orleans had already lost the popularity which had attended the beginning of the regency, and he did not wish to increase the ill-favor with which his administration was regarded.

The measures adopted by Philip and Alberoni removed all difficulties from his path. Though the hopes which greeted the reforms promised by the regent had been disappointed, the thought of any revolt against his authority could only be entertained by discontented visionaries. Orleans's power was as firmly established as if he had been king instead of regent, and, after sixty years of implicit obedience to the sovereign, the idea of open resistance was foreign to the community. The great body of the population desired peace and tranquillity, and cared little whether the regent made an alliance with England or with Spain, whether he chose Dubois or Maine as his adviser.

The discontents of a little clique were enough, however, to excite the hopes of Alberoni, and some harmless vaporing was dignified with the importance of a dangerous conspiracy. The Duke of Maine had been

[1] Craggs to Dubois, November 28, 1718.

deprived of the rank bestowed on him by the fondness of Louis XIV. A very small portion of the community took any interest in his fortunes, and he was the last man to become the leader of an insurrection. Not only was he dull and inert, but he was suspected, and not unjustly, of a lack of physical courage. Among a nation where courage was highly esteemed, and was almost universally possessed, there could be no more fatal defect in a man who aspired to become a leader. To do Maine justice, he had not the least aspiration for such a rôle.

His wife was a more energetic character. Their chateau at Sceaux had long been a centre for society and literature. Its mistress amused herself with a constant succession of fêtes. Plays were acted, poets recited verses, courtiers turned compliments, ladies exercised their charms. The duchess founded an order called the Honey Bees, to which those distinguished by fashion or by wit were delighted to be admitted. Fontenelle was one of the ornaments of her little court. The first president of the Parliament there displayed his talents as a courtier, which atoned for his lack of any talent as a judge. This charmed existence was broken in upon by the political misfortunes of the Duke of Maine. His wife abandoned the part of a delightful hostess for the more serious one of a political conspirator. She was better fitted for the former rôle than the latter. A few nobles of small importance joined in conferences where little was done except to abuse the regent. The Prince of Cellamare was then Spanish ambassador at Paris. The relations of his master and of the Duke of Orleans were unfriendly, and those who were offended with the regent naturally sought the counsels

of the ambassador. The Duchess of Maine and some of her associates conferred with Cellamare. He seems to have estimated the conspirators at their just weight, but he reported their plans to his government. Alberoni attached to them an undue importance, and he directed the minister to continue the consultations. The cardinal hoped that a few uninfluential intriguers, without definite plans, and without means of executing what plans they had, could overthrow the regent and bring France again into close alliance with Philip.[1]

These intrigues continued for some months. A few persons signed papers assuring Philip of their devotion and of their willingness to serve him. The young Duke of Richelieu agreed to betray the town where he was stationed to the Spanish king.[2] He began his long and disgraceful career by conduct, the baseness of which was equaled by the folly. The conspirators had little idea of what they wanted to do, and no idea whatever of how they were to do it. Proclamations were indited, in Philip's name, demanding a session of the States General of France. That body, it was believed, would depose Orleans from the regency, would renew the alliance between France and Spain, restore to Maine his forfeited rank, and assure to Philip his rights to the French throne. The only thing in which the plotters showed any real zeal was in discussing the verbiage of Philip's proclamations. The habitués of Sceaux, who were pretending to be conspirators, were only fitted to debate questions of grammar, and to amplify the resonance of a phrase.

[1] St. Aignan à Huxelles, August 28, 1718 ; Alberoni à Cellamare, August 20, 1718.

[2] Dubois à Berwick, April 1, 1719.

On these idle schemes Alberoni continued to build his hopes. "Do not leave Paris," he wrote Cellamare, "without having set fire to all the mines."[1] "They are mines without powder," replied the ambassador.

These intrigues did not escape the vigilance of Dubois. He was warned of their existence in the summer of 1718, but he was in no haste to expose them. Copies of many of the papers were furnished him by an unfaithful employee of Cellamare. In December, two gentlemen were sent to Spain with various documents of the conspirators. At Poitiers they were arrested and the papers seized. Immediately after this the official residence of Cellamare was entered; his letters were taken possession of by the French government; he was himself arrested, and was afterwards sent out of France under a strong guard. He protested against this invasion of his sacred character, but the letters which had passed between him and Alberoni, and which proved that the Spanish minister and ambassador were encouraging plots against the head of the French government, showed that Cellamare had forfeited the immunities to which his office entitled him.

The arrest of those who were involved in these transactions soon followed. The Duke of Maine had no part in the intrigues of his wife, and knew nothing of them. He was, however, taken into custody, and he displayed the greatest pusillanimity. He was arrested at Sceaux and carried to Dourlens. During the long journey he hardly spoke, but uttered frequent sighs and sobs. At each church which was passed, he bowed profoundly, crossed himself, and muttered his prayers. At his prison at Dourlens he occupied him-

[1] Alberoni to Cellamare, December 14, 1718.

self in praying for deliverance, and when he heard any sudden noise his face became of a deathly pallor.[1] After a time he was released, but it was long before he would have anything to do with his wife, for fear that her unquiet disposition would again involve him in similar peril. She was also arrested, as were many of her confederates. All, with one accord, sought to obtain forgiveness by turning state's evidence, and endeavoring to implicate others.

"I would have given my blood to save you," wrote the Abbé Brigault to some of his associates whom his confessions involved, "but you know the obligations of religion. . . . I cannot hope for absolution unless I tell the whole truth. . . . I must follow the lights of my faith." [2] All were, perhaps, influenced by the same motives. The Duchess of Maine wrote Orleans that even liberty would be insupportable, unless she could be assured of again enjoying his friendship. Orleans contented himself with the terror and humiliation of the unfortunate intriguers. After a few months' imprisonment, all were released without further punishment.[3]

The exposure of the conspiracy satisfied the purposes of Dubois. The French people were justly indignant that the Spanish prime minister had encouraged plots against the head of the government.

[1] Related to St. Simon by Favancourt, who conducted Maine to Dourlens, and there had charge of the prisoner.

[2] Abbé Brigault to Mme. de Pompadour.

[3] All the papers in reference to this abortive conspiracy are preserved in the *Archives des Affaires Etrangères.* Lémontey has published the most important of the depositions. The agreeable *Memoirs of Mme. de Staël Delaunay* give some accurate, and the *Memoirs of St. Simon* some inaccurate, information on the subject.

The party of the old court and the advocates of Philip V. were plunged in confusion. In January, 1719, war was declared against Spain. In answer to this, proclamations in the name of the Spanish king were published in France, exhorting the people and the Parliaments to resist the tyranny of the Duke of Orleans, to summon the States General, and to check a fratricidal war. They produced no effect. The French army was placed under the command of the Marshal of Berwick, the bastard son of James II. He was a man who recognized no obligations but those of a soldier. He conducted the campaign against Philip with the same ability that he had formerly displayed in behalf of that monarch.

Philip still cherished the delusion that the hearts of the French people were unalterably attached to the grandson of Louis XIV. The *fleurs de lis* were painted on the Spanish banners. A proclamation invited the French soldiers to join the Spanish army, and assured them that Louis XV. would approve their conduct when he should attain his majority.[1] Neither officer nor soldier in the French ranks heeded this appeal. Philip seems really to have supposed that his appearance would dissolve the French army; when he discovered his illusion, he fell into a deep melancholy, and left the queen to excite the ardor of the Spanish troops.

The advance of the French met with few obstacles. They overran Spain with little more resistance, wrote one of their officers, than the Spanish themselves had met with in the conquest of Mexico two hundred years before. In the mean time the Austrians with superior forces encountered the troops that had been

[1] *Déclaration*, April 27, 1719.

landed in Sicily, and the English ships cruised along the defenseless shores of Spain. Even Philip and his wife began to realize the folly of the contest which they had excited. A final endeavor was made to draw Orleans from the alliance. Philip suggested a scheme by which, while his own son should succeed to the French throne if Louis died, Orleans should be consoled with the formation of a new kingdom for himself, to be taken from France, and to consist of Burgundy, Alsace, and French Flanders. Great Britain was to be parceled in like manner; the Pretender would have Scotland and Ireland, while George must be content with England.[1] This proposition was one of the last schemes devised while Alberoni remained prime minister. Certainly a man who could invent and propose plans so chimerical had no claim to be called a statesman.

The disasters which had attended Alberoni's measures weakened the influence which he had once possessed. The allies declared that his dismissal must be the price of peace. His unbounded ambition had been the sole cause of the war, wrote Stanhope, and unless he was removed there could be no certainty of permanent tranquillity.[2] The Duke of Parma advised his niece to dismiss the cardinal, and Philip yielded to these suggestions. Alberoni had been a visionary, but only a visionary could please such masters. He had at least been zealous in their service, and he was now treated with harshness. He was ordered to leave Madrid in eight days, and Spain within three weeks. He never again returned, and in his wanderings in Italy he was long pursued by the animosity of his

[1] Philip to Conti, June 12, 1719.

[2] Stanhope to Dubois, August 22, 1719.

former masters. He revenged himself by telling the truth about them. Philip, he said, was an uxorious bigot, and the queen was a firebrand who would kindle the flames of war through the civilized world. Both the Pope and the Spanish king were eager to deprive Alberoni of his cardinalate, but the common interest of the cardinals always prevented the degradation of any one who had been clothed with that dignity. Alberoni even contemplated the possibility of being a candidate for the papacy. "There are two obstacles," he said; "I am only fifty-five, and I have not the reputation of being a fool."[1] At one conclave he received ten votes, but, whether he was too young or too wise, he failed of an election.

Though Alberoni had been dismissed, Philip still persisted in his extravagant claims. He was informed that he must take what was secured to him by the treaty of the Quadruple Alliance, and he decided to accept. Once again he swore to the renunciation of his possible rights to the French throne. As he never for a moment intended to observe his oath, this did not disturb him. He was, however, strenuous in his demands for Gibraltar. The English replied that they had offered Gibraltar to obtain peace, but the offer was no longer in force after Philip had gone to war and been defeated. It was at last agreed that this and other debated questions should be referred to a congress of the various powers to be held at Cambray. "The congress," said Dubois, "will occupy half its session in regulating questions of etiquette, and the other half in doing nothing, and then some unforeseen event will bring it to an end." That was precisely its history. The various plenipotentiaries wasted

[1] Letter of Marcieu, cited by Lémontey.

several years doing nothing, and in 1725 Spain and Austria made a treaty of alliance, and arranged between themselves the unsettled questions of the Spanish Succession.

While Spain was forced to remain at peace, much to the advantage of the country, and much to the discontent of its sovereign, France witnessed the development of new commercial and financial systems, which attracted the attention of the world, and which have still a curious interest for posterity.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAW AND HIS SYSTEM.

THE system of Law and the Mississippi bubble represent to most readers only a crazy speculation, resulting in a disastrous failure. This it certainly was, and yet it is a chapter of financial history that is not without value even in our day. Its originator, notwithstanding the fallacies by which he was entrapped, was a man who possessed an acute and inventive mind. He might well have become known as one of the fathers of modern finance. Unfortunately for his fame, his errors proved so disastrous that he has been doomed to immortality as one of the greatest of financial charlatans.

John Law was born at Edinburgh in 1671. His father, William Law, was a goldsmith, and, as was customary at that period, combined with his trade the care of moneys intrusted to him, and many of the functions now discharged by bankers. John was well educated at Edinburgh; he is said to have displayed great proficiency in mathematics, and especially in the intricacies of algebra. His father died leaving a moderate estate, and the son found himself, when little more than a lad, possessed of a handsome face, agreeable manners, and some money. It was not strange that he should have devoted himself to the pursuit of pleasure, and this he seems to have done with considerable assiduity. London furnished greater

opportunities for a young man with such tastes than the religious and sombre society of Edinburgh. In London, Law spent several years. His prepossessing manners gained him friends, but he was known chiefly by his skill as a gambler and by his intrigues with women. As a result of one of his successes in gallantry, he fought a duel with a Mr. Wilson, and killed him on the spot. For this crime he was tried, convicted of murder, and sentenced to be hung. While the laws against dueling were severe, public opinion viewed such offenses with leniency, and Law obtained a pardon. Through some interference of Wilson's family he was kept in prison, but he succeeded in making his escape, and sought refuge on the Continent.

In the mean time the Bank of England had been organized, and the successful operation of that institution undoubtedly attracted Law's attention. After leaving England, he spent some time at Amsterdam, and made a close study of the bank, which had there been in operation for almost a century. Its workings differed from those of its English rival and from modern institutions. It had, however, rendered great services to commerce, and its directors justly claimed for it a large share in fostering that business prosperity and financial solidity in which the Seven Provinces excelled the rest of the world.

Law had a natural taste for mathematical combinations; for the laws which underlie the fluctuations of trade, as well as for those which govern the turn of the card. By grasping the principles of finance, and applying them to the business transactions of the world, he believed that he could achieve results far more dazzling than from the most thorough knowledge of the chances in faro or écarté. His mind was es-

sentially that of the inventor. A distrust of innovations was then a marked characteristic of public sentiment, and especially was this true of finance. The fundamental laws of that science, which are still a mystery to many, were then unknown to almost all. The innumerable abuses which hindered commerce found few or none to question them. Alike statesmen and merchants preferred to follow traditions which were abundantly incrusted with age. Novelty, on the other hand, attracted Law instead of repelling him. Respectable aldermen and opulent burgesses might assert, with common consent, that gold was the only wealth, but this did not convince his inquiring mind. The eighteenth century was destined to be one of innovation in almost every branch of thought. Law was early affected by the breath of change, and he applied the spirit of inquiry to the financial questions which possessed an irresistible attraction for his mind.

The discoveries which he believed himself to have made he was eager to impart to the public. He returned to Scotland, and published a proposal for supplying the nation with money. That these suggestions should have contained many errors is not strange; if adopted, they would certainly have plunged that country in disastrous confusion, and rendered worse a condition that was already bad. It is more surprising, and may well discourage those who believe in the development of the human intellect, that the same fallacies find credence two centuries later, in the most advanced commercial nations, and are sufficiently advocated to constitute a menace to national prosperity.

Though Law himself became involved in delusions, he had sufficient acuteness to detect those of others. In the project which he presented to his Scotch fellow-

citizens, as in his subsequent writings, he exposed errors which were then implicitly believed by almost every man in Europe. He stated correctly the nature of money. Gold and silver, he said, were not received by any arbitrary convention; they circulated at their absolute value to the community, as would any other article that might have been selected as a medium of exchange. They varied, as did corn and copper, from the laws of supply and demand. With much acuteness he commented on the depreciation which the medium thus chosen had undergone. The great fall in the value of the precious metals, resulting from the discovery of the American mines, had been going on for two hundred years, but it had either been unnoticed or misunderstood. Those who believed that the wealth of a nation was measured solely by the number of pieces of gold and silver within its boundaries, were not in position to investigate the gradual rise in the relative value of all articles which had long been progressing. This phenomenon was appreciated by Law, and he based upon it some of his arguments for a paper currency. The piece of gold which would buy a bushel of wheat two hundred years ago, he wrote, would now only buy a tenth of a bushel: thus the material chosen for currency, because it was not subject to fluctuation, really possessed only one tenth of its former value. Instead of being an article of extraordinary stability, it had suffered an unprecedented fall, as compared with other commodities. While Law was not deceived by the vulgar fallacy that a nation's wealth consisted of its store of gold and silver, he declared to his Scotch readers that ample appliances for the exchange of values were required in order to increase their commerce and aug-

ment their prosperity. Here, also, he undoubtedly apprehended justly one of the requirements for the great industrial development of modern times. It is certain that the business of London could not be done with the currency of Borneo; that a medium by which values can circulate with rapidity is as requisite as roads on which commodities can be conveyed with speed. The growth of business which began in Law's time required other means for its transaction than money carried about in sacks from shop to shop. The stock exchanges of London and New York could not be kept open for a day with such facilities for credit and means of payment as then existed, any more than the freight of a modern railroad could be transported over a mediæval highway.

The circulation which is thus required as a concomitant of industry Law believed could of itself create that industry. "Wealth depends on commerce," he wrote, "and commerce depends on circulation." The Scotch had but little silver and gold, and therefore they were poor. To make them rich, they required banks which could pour forth a stream of currency that would make the valley of the Clyde and the fields of Fife blossom with prosperity, that would transform the shopkeeper of Edinburgh into the merchant prince of Genoa and Amsterdam. There was no reason, he declared, why Scotland, with many natural advantages, should be inferior in wealth to Holland that had so few. Indolence and a lack of probity in the Scotch people, he said, were the reasons given for their backwardness. He need not have claimed that the heavy air of Holland tended equally towards sluggishness, to convince posterity that neither sloth nor dishonesty have ever retarded the progress of the Scotch people.

Later in his career, Law reached the point of issuing a currency which had no security save the promise of the sovereign to pay. Such a course, however, he did not advocate in his earlier writings. It was the fever of speculation that led him to print indefinite quantities of paper bills which represented no real value. To the Scotch he said that the currency which would redeem their country from poverty must be based on values which would give it credit. "Some objector will say," he wrote, "that paper currency is enabled to circulate because one can get the money for it when he desires." Nothing was more reasonable, he admitted, but his currency would be still more secure. Gold and silver were the basis for one system, the land would be the security for the other. The precious metals, as he had shown, fluctuated in value and had suffered great depreciation; land, on the other hand, tended constantly to become more valuable. Then, also, the gold that was in circulation could answer no other useful purpose, while the land, which secured a currency that should replace it, would at the same time continue to produce the fruits of the earth. It would yield no less corn or oats because the paper which represented its value was paying the laborer his wages and enabling the shopkeeper to replenish his wares. Law proposed, therefore, that commissioners should be authorized to issue paper money to all who required it, to be secured by mortgages to the value of two thirds of the land, or issued for the entire value, upon the land's being turned over to the commission. Such a currency, he said, would necessarily be in proportion to the needs of the community. In other words, if any man wanted money, and had the land to secure it, he could get as much as

he required; when no one needed money there would be no demand, and none would be issued. Thus the currency would regulate itself, like a safety valve. So confident was he of the superiority of such a medium of circulation over gold and silver, that he advised a provision limiting the premium on paper to ten per cent. The debtor who was liable for one hundred pounds, and whose creditors would naturally insist on receiving paper currency for their pay, might be relieved from his obligation by tendering one hundred and ten pounds in gold. Such a premium, at least, Law felt sure would be commanded by a currency that was convenient, could be cheaply transported, and was safe from depreciation.[1]

It is easy to see that, if this scheme had been adopted, there would have been an enormous inflation in Scotland, followed by a long period of disastrous reaction. Every man who wanted to get rid of his land, or to speculate by obtaining a large loan on it, would have applied to the commissioners for money. Enormous amounts of bills would have been issued; those who held the paper would soon have begun to present it for redemption. The state would have become the owner of half the land in the kingdom; it would have been impossible to realize from innumerable farms and lots thrown upon the market enough to meet its bills. The history of the French assignats in the Revolution would have been anticipated in Scotland. There was, however, little danger of the adoption of Law's proposals. The Scotch were smarting from the disastrous results of the Darien Expedition, and they were not inclined to any new ventures.

[1] These views will be found fully set out in Law's *Proposal for Supplying the Nation with Money.*

Discouraged by the apathy of his countrymen, Law returned to his travels in Europe. He visited most of the principal cities; he studied the finances of various countries; he investigated with especial care the banking systems in the few places where such existed. His taste for ingenious theories was not allowed to lie entirely idle during these years. Gambling was then deemed a pastime and not a vice. There was high play at every court; a gentleman's face was expected to be seen at the card table as much as at the king's levée. At a time when opportunities for speculation could be found with difficulty, gambling at cards was the only substitute which satisfied the love of excitement and furnished the hope of easy gain. It was no discredit to a man to earn his livelihood at cards. Law had soon dissipated his patrimony, but his skill as a player furnished him the means of living in luxury and accumulating a considerable fortune. There can be little doubt that he adopted a system for his play, as he did later for his banks and companies of commerce. The most of those whom he met played recklessly, looking to luck for success. Law studied the chances of the cards, the probabilities of their combinations, and on them staked his money. The result showed that his policy was the better one. The science of the chances rarely fails one who knows enough to master it, and has resolution enough to follow it. In the great cities which Law visited in his rambling career, he soon became known as a bold and a successful gambler.

In 1708, he went to Paris, in the darkest period of the war of the Spanish Succession. Undismayed by the disastrous condition of affairs, he proposed to the Comptroller General measures which would extricate

the country from its bankrupt condition. His offers seem to have received some attention, but they were not adopted. In an age of conservatism, Louis XIV. was distinguished by an especial aversion for whatever was new. A sovereign who disliked to see even new faces about him was not attracted by revolutionary schemes of any nature. Law realized that there was no likelihood of his projects finding favor with those who then governed France, but he made friends who might be of use when the present administration should pass away. His manners were engaging, his conversation agreeable. Though he spoke French like a foreigner, yet he could express himself in that language with ease and with correctness.[1] He had a natural gift for lucid explanation. Theories about credit and currency, which are usually obscure and confusing, when explained by him became so simple that the most ordinary mind could grasp them. The clearness of his style, both as a talker and a writer, enabled him to glide unobserved over the fallacies which often lay beneath. He had the faculty of convincing himself and others.

His social qualities rendered him popular, and his skill at the card table made him a welcome member of a society where all played and played high. He frequently acted as banker at the faro tables at Duclos's, a tragedian then in fashion, at whose house the most famous players were to be found. He played boldly and brilliantly. It was said that he brought with him for the game two sacks full of gold, containing 100,000 livres, and no prince nor duke watched his

[1] "He does not speak French badly, at least he speaks it better than the English usually do," is the qualified praise of the mother of the regent.

stake with more noble unconcern. Though he won constantly and largely, he was never accused of unfair playing. The advantages which he possessed were the legitimate ones of superior skill and judgment, and he was admired by those whose money he gained. A foreigner who becomes known as a gambler with phenomenal success excites, however, the suspicion of the police, if not of his associates, and Law was presently notified by the authorities that so skillful a player could not be allowed to remain in Paris. He started again on his journeys, and seems to have met with similar experiences in other cities. Notwithstanding occasional rebuffs, he continued to live on a large scale, and was popular with every one except the police.

Frequent disappointments did not shake Law's belief that he had discovered important financial secrets, nor did his mode of life destroy his ambition to renovate the commerce and industry of the world. In his visits to Paris he had acquired the friendship of the Duke of Orleans, who was attracted alike by the easy recklessness of Law's private life, and by the novelty and ingenuity of his theories. Louis XIV. died, and Orleans became regent with an uncontrolled authority. Law felt that he would not find another ruler from whom he would be so likely to obtain the opportunity which he had so long and so vainly desired. He again turned his steps towards Paris. He had accumulated a fortune of a million and a half livres, which was sufficient to enable him to live with comfort, and even with splendor. He was in full vigor of mind and body, and he brought with him a confidence in his theories that inspired confidence in others.

The finances of France were in such desperate

plight that the most prudent man might feel inclined to resort to new and radical measures for their extrication. The condition of the country at the death of Louis XIV. was worse than it had been for over half a century. The indebtedness was vastly larger in proportion to the resources of the country than the present debt of France; it was one which it was impossible to meet. A portion of it consisted in irredeemable paper of the government, and this was more harmful to trade than the burden of taxation. France has often proved her recuperative power after disastrous wars and under the weight of heavy indebtedness, but at this period the prosperity did not exist which would, after a few years of peace, restore the national credit and adjust the financial burdens. Every department of industry was stagnant. Few ships carrying the flag of France traversed any sea, little of her product was exported into any land, manufactures were at their lowest ebb, agriculture had never been more unprosperous. The Draconian remedies, by which the indebtedness of the government was reduced, had not restored prosperity. The best that the minister of finance could promise was, that, if the country remained at peace and the closest economy was practiced, in eleven years the receipts might equal the expenses. Such a prospect did not allure the regent, who wished his administration to be brilliant, and did not care to have it economical.

In this situation of affairs, Law again offered to assist France in her distress; to render her debt light by making her people rich; to restore her commerce, build up her industries, and make the regency of Orleans memorable as the beginning of an era of larger enterprise, increasing wealth, and abundant

prosperity. His projects were submitted not only by word of mouth, but in a series of memoirs and letters. They illustrate Law's acuteness, and his apprehension of the possibilities of an increase in trade and wealth such as there was no record of in the past, but the future was in reality to show. They contain also the fallacies by which he was led astray, which involved his projects in disaster and blasted his hopes and his ambitions. In the views which he now laid before the regent and the public, he attacked with boldness and with truth the beliefs that had long been the corner-stones of the old régime of economical speculation. The laws which changed the nominal value of money he declared to be injurious and unjust; those which sought to fix the value of commodities, to prevent the export of gold and establish the rate of interest, to be injurious and futile.[1] His views on these questions have long been adopted, and endeavors to lower the rate of interest by legislation are the only relics of the errors which he exposed that can now be found among civilized nations. In the early part of the eighteenth century, however, these fallacies were as generally accepted as they now are discarded. Law demonstrated with equal clearness the injury which France had suffered from erroneous financial theories. Though he bore little love for England, he recognized the fact that by better laws and more sagacious methods that country would soon surpass France, notwithstanding the superiority of the latter in population and natural advantages. "A nation provided with firearms has not a greater advantage over one that has only bows and arrows," he wrote, "than the English have over the French in matters

[1] *Mém. sur l'usage des monnaies.*

of commerce."[1] Had France been as well governed as England, he justly said, her condition at the end of the war of the Succession would have been far removed from the misery in which she was involved; a measure in violation of the laws of finance had often cost the country more than the loss of a pitched battle, and the depreciation of the currency by Louis XIV. had weakened his kingdom more than years of war.[2]

Having exposed many of the fallacies of his predecessors, Law proceeded with the explanation of his own plan for increasing the national wealth. However defective was the machinery which he afterwards adopted to bring about this result, he saw with prophetic eye what was required for the transaction of business on the great scale of modern times. "What is needed," he said, "is credit." The French were not yet far removed from the primitive days of barter, but if a sound system of credit could be established, the industrial resources of the country might be enlarged tenfold. The merchant with a capital of 100,000 could with safety transact business on a scale that then required 1,000,000. More men could be employed, more goods manufactured, more bushels of wheat harvested, more barrels of wine sold. All this was entirely true. The wildest dreams of Law fell far short of the development of industry and commerce which has come in a century and a half. The difference in wealth between France to-day and under Louis XIV. is greater than between France under Louis XIV. and under Hugh Capet. More progress has been made in one hundred and fifty years than was made in seven hundred years. Many things have con-

[1] *Lettres sur les banques.*

[2] *Mém. sur les banques.*

tributed to such a result, but among them has been the growth of a system of credit which Law justly claimed must exist before a nation could increase rapidly in wealth.

The best means for furnishing this requirement for enlarged trade he found in his favorite scheme of a bank, and he dwelt upon the advantages which such institutions had rendered where they were established, and could render in France. Banks are now in no need of treatises to show their utility. Every one knows that without their aid the business of the world could not be done at all; that to close the banks would paralyze business, and involve the community in greater confusion than if the butchers and bakers should suddenly cease to vend their wares. All this is familiar, but it was far from being accepted in the era of Louis XIV. Such institutions were unknown in France, and little known anywhere. The Bank of Amsterdam was regarded as a mystery; the Bank of England had been established but a few years, and its creation had aroused the hostility of a large portion of those who were considered as the practical, hard-headed business men of the community.

Not only did Law insist on the great utility of such an organization, but the plan which he suggested was subject to little criticism. He advised that the bills of the bank should be made payable in coin of a fixed weight and amount, in order to relieve business from the paralysis caused by the frequent depreciations of the currency by the government.[1] He recognized the necessity of measures by which the bills could always be promptly redeemed in coin. Such a currency, he

[1] This advantage is dwelt upon in Law's *Mémoire sur les banques,* presented to the Duke of Orleans.

thought, would be preferred to gold and silver, on account of its many advantages, but he admitted that it must be redeemable to give it credit.

Views like these might entitle Law to rank as one of the fathers of modern commerce. But with them appear the delusions by which he was beset, and which became more pronounced as he advanced in his career. He was not content with establishing a judicious system of credit, with freeing industry from artificial restraints, and thus allowing it to develop to the fullest extent. By the very act of issuing currency, he declared that he could make the country richer, that plenty of banknotes would not only aid a commerce that existed, but could create one that had no existence; that an abundant currency would of itself bring prosperity to the land.

"A state," he wrote, "must have a certain quantity of money proportioned to the number of its people," thus giving utterance to a fallacy that still has many believers.[1] The wealth of the Dutch he declared to be based upon the large amount of money which they had in circulation; a country where the currency was five hundred millions would necessarily do more business and increase more rapidly in wealth than one where there was only half that amount.[2] His own career was to furnish a lamentable proof of how false is such a belief; was to show that putting in circulation for each member of the community one thousand francs in place of one hundred, instead of making every one rich, may result in making every one poor. These errors, however, were not dangerous so long as Law simply proposed to open a bank, of which the currency should be redeemable in coin. Such an in-

[1] *Mém. sur les banques.* [2] *Ib.*

stitution could furnish business facilities, and it was impossible that it could keep outstanding an amount of circulation which was in excess of the needs of the community.

Law said little about the great trading companies which he organized later, and which formed so important a part of what can properly be called his system. Doubtless he contemplated such projects, if he could succeed in establishing the bank. He hinted at these schemes in one of his letters to the regent: "My bank is not the only nor the greatest of my ideas. I will produce something which will surprise Europe by the changes which it will produce in favor of France, — changes greater than have resulted from the discovery of the West Indies, or from the introduction of credit. . . . The regency of your highness, well employed, will suffice to increase the population to thirty millions, and the king's revenue to three hundred millions." [1]

The regent was attracted by the projector and by his plans, and not all the disasters which ensued destroyed the friendly sentiments with which he always regarded the Scotch innovator. Hardly a month had passed since Louis XIV.'s death when Law's project for a state bank was laid before the council of finance. There it met with an unfriendly reception.[2]

To some, the fact that it was a novelty was enough to condemn it; others, with better reason, declared that a bank under the control of the government might be safe in a republic or a limited monarchy, but it would be sure to be abused where the king was absolute. An unfortunate war, the prodigality of a

[1] Lettre I., *Sur les banques.*

[2] *Délibérations du Conseil,* October 24, 1715.

sovereign, the avidity of a minister, a favorite, or a mistress, would exhaust the bank and ruin those who held its bills.[1] Law's answer to such objections showed the hopefulness of a projector, rather than the sagacity of a man of affairs. A bank, he insisted, would so increase the wealth of kingdom, and therefore the revenues of the king, that it was incredible to suppose that any monarch would destroy the usefulness of an institution from the existence of which he would himself be the chief gainer.[2] Notwithstanding his arguments, the plan for a state bank was rejected.

The regent was almost as eager as Law himself to make some such experiment. He used his personal influence in behalf of the scheme, and the form in which it was now presented was free from any reasonable objection. It was proposed to open a private bank, whose bills should be always redeemable in coin. All that Law asked was, that it should receive the sanction of the government, and that he should be allowed to act as the manager. In May, 1716, letters patent were granted authorizing the organization of a private bank with a capital of six million livres. Its functions were strictly and judiciously regulated. Its bills must be paid when presented; it was not allowed to borrow; its operations must be confined to receiving money on deposit, and discounting commercial paper. In the month following, the bank, which was to become so famous, modestly began its career in the house where Law lived, Place Louis le Grand.

The benefits of this institution were soon visible. The merchants, who had looked upon it with suspicion, quickly availed themselves of the advantages which it afforded. Its charter contained a provision requiring

[1] *St. Simon*, xiii. 51. [2] *Mém. sur les banques.*

its bills to be paid in coin of a fixed weight, and this alone gave a new life to commerce. The nominal value of gold and silver had been subjected by the government to more than twenty modifications within fifteen years. The specie value of a louis or a livre fluctuated like the price of shares in the market. No man could agree to buy or sell for one thousand livres, and feel any certainty as to what the real value of one thousand livres would be when the time for payment came. The result was, that men dared not either buy or sell, and commerce was paralyzed. The bills of Law's bank now furnished a currency safe and convenient in use, and of which the value could not be modified by any royal edict. They were sought for alike by citizens and by foreigners. If a contract was made payable in these bills, the parties could calculate with certainty on the liability assumed and the price to be received. For two years and a half the bank remained a private institution, and during that time it issued bills to the amount of fifty-one million livres. They were easily absorbed by the community. Whenever presented for payment, they were promptly discharged in specie. The bank soon received the accounts of those who had money to deposit, and the demands of those who wished to borrow. Law's management seems to have been judicious and conservative. Commercial paper was first discounted at six per cent.; when money became more plentiful, the rate fell to four per cent. The improvement in the financial condition that followed the organization of the bank attracted the attention of all. Merchants undertook new enterprises; manufacturers increased their products; the market for grain improved; the rate of interest fell.[1]

[1] Forbonnais, *Mém. et cor. du Duc de Noailles.*

Had Law been content to continue his establishment on the same basis, the Bank of France would probably have traced its origin to him, and could have claimed an antiquity almost equaling that of its English rival. Such a career fell far short of satisfying the ambitious dreams of the manager. The success which he had achieved strengthened his confidence in the correctness of his views. It increased also his favor with the regent and his influence in the community. He could appeal to the results of the experiment, which after much opposition he had been allowed to make, when he pictured the benefits that would flow from an application of his ideas on a larger scale.

In December, 1718, Law's bank was changed from a private into a state institution.[1] Those who had invested in its stock were bought out, and made a handsome profit. While the same management continued, it was now under the control of the royal council. The king was liable for the bills issued, and the amount of them was regulated by the government. In our day, a bank thus guaranteed by the state would, in some countries, possess a credit exceeding that of any private establishment. It was far from being so in France at this era. The amount of the circulation could no longer be restricted by the action of the business community, as with a private bank that must meet its liabilities promptly or be forced into liquidation. Bills could be poured out as required by the necessities of the state, by the greed or the bad judgment of its rulers. The promises of the king to meet his obligations had often been dishonored; there was no certainty that bills of his bank would escape the fate of other forms of indebtedness. The power of debasing

[1] *Déclaration*, December 4, 1718.

the currency had been recklessly exercised, and it was sure to be again resorted to when there was need of such a measure. The organization of a royal bank was, however, in accordance with Law's desires. His belief was firm that wealth could be more rapidly created by authority of the state than by the free action of the individual. In this tenet, as in many others, he was the precursor of those who advocate the control of business enterprises by the public. His endeavor to make the community rich and happy was now to be undertaken on a great scale.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MISSISSIPPI COMPANY.

1717–1720.

As soon as the bank was in successful operation, Law began the development of the other and more important projects, which he had assured the regent would increase the population of France fifty per cent., and its wealth in still greater proportion. Credit was now reëstablished, and a medium existed for furnishing currency in such amounts as might be required. These advantages Law sought to utilize, and he declared that he could make France the great commercial nation of the world. To bring about such a result, it was necessary to reach foreign markets, to control the intercourse between European civilization and the Indies in the East and America in the West. Thus a commerce might be created such as mankind had never seen; the hidden treasures of the earth would be discovered; areas greater than France, that knew not the sower nor the reaper, would furnish food for all who needed; the development of new lands would create for the countries of Europe a prosperity hitherto unknown. The dreams of Law have to some extent been realized by the commercial history of Great Britain, and they have produced wealth far exceeding the visions of the wildest operator in the Rue Quincampoix.

Commercial companies, who should not only gain riches for themselves, but should extend the influence of France over regions more extensive than the fatherland, had been organized and encouraged by Richelieu and by Colbert. The efforts of these statesmen had been unsuccessful. The companies, notwithstanding the privileges they had been granted and the financial aid which they had received, were now either extinct or moribund. More recently, the monopoly of trade with Louisiana had been granted to a wealthy financier named Crozat, but the enterprise was too great for his resources, and he had taken no steps toward developing the resources of that vast and unexplored territory. Law chose this as the field for his new enterprises. Crozat resigned his privileges, and in August, 1717, the Company of the West was created by royal letters patent. It soon came to be known by the name of the Mississippi, from the great river included within its territories. To this company the king gave a monopoly for twenty-five years of all commerce between France and the province of Louisiana. The privilege was accompanied by a grant which makes the most extensive gifts to modern corporations seem insignificant. The company was given the absolute title to all the territory included in what was then called Louisiana. Beginning at the mouth of the Mississippi, this extended for three thousand miles northward to the head of the stream; it was bounded on the east by the Alleghanies, and on the west by the Rocky Mountains. The present States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota include only a portion of the territory of which the sovereignty was vested in the Company of the West. Over this enormous area

it might exercise the prerogatives of a sovereign; it could equip fleets, raise armies, found colonies, administer the laws.

It was indeed true that the rights of the French government over the empire of which it assumed to dispose were but vague. They rested on claims made in behalf of the *fleurs de lis* by hardy adventurers; they were evidenced only by a few forts and settlements, scattered over a territory many times larger than the kingdom of France. Marquette and La Salle had visited the plains of the West, they had explored the great river which flows through them. La Salle had taken possession of the land in behalf of Louis XIV. of France. Louis had been solemnly declared the monarch of wildernesses, the extent of which was unknown. The acquiescence of a few savages was taken as a recognition of this sovereignty. Tribes bearing names unfamiliar to Parisian ears — Illinois, Arkansas, and Missouris — were claimed to be subjects of the infant who now occupied the throne of France. Vague as were such pretensions of ownership, they were superior to those of any other European government. It was certain that these fertile lands could not forever remain under the control of roving bands of Indians. The French title was sufficient, if it had been followed by colonization and military occupation, to have been respected by the rest of the world.

The territory upon which the hopes of the new company were based was uncultivated, and to a large extent uninhabited. But the fertile soil, the great forests, the mineral wealth, only waited the hand of civilized man for their development. Within a period twice as long as the reign of Louis XIV. they con-

tained millions of inhabitants. Had the wealth and valor of France, during the reign which was then beginning, been devoted to building up an empire in the West, instead of to European wars, undertaken from caprice and productive of ignominy, that period would have been sufficient to have rendered the territory of Louisiana the most important possession of the French crown, and the Company of the West might have exceeded in power and wealth the East India Company of England.

Law was forced to admit that the colonial companies which had been heretofore created in France had ended in disaster. The reason for this, he said, was, that they were imperfectly equipped for so great undertakings; they had not sufficient capital; remissness and ignorance had marked their administration. Now, however, a corporation would attempt the task of colonizing and developing the territories of the West, possessing unlimited means, enjoying the special favor of the sovereign, taught by the experience of its predecessors. The coat-of-arms of the new company symbolized its future. The Mississippi and the horn of plenty replaced heraldic lions and unicorns, while Indians sustained the field of *fleurs de lis*.

To provide the necessary capital, shares were issued of the value of 500 francs each, to the amount of 100,000,000 livres. For the period, this was a great sum of money. Had it been actually paid and used, much could have been done toward colonizing and developing the valley of the Mississippi. Unfortunately, while Law's purposes were often sagacious, he was reckless as to the means. His hopes were so buoyant that he was confident of the result, no matter on what terms the experiment was made. In his desire to

obtain a concession from the crown and to place his stock, this was made payable in the notes of the government which were then outstanding. They were at a discount of over sixty per cent., and the capital actually paid into the company was only one third of its nominal amount. Nor was this all. The state was in no position to redeem its notes. Law therefore agreed that the 100,000,000 which were thus received should be funded at four per cent. The capital of the company, instead of being represented by ships, stores, forts, and warehouses, was invested in the obligations of a government whose credit was exceedingly poor. Only the interest on this sum would be available for the actual work of commerce and colonization, and this at most was 4,000,000 livres a year. The projector of the new company probably hoped that, in an era of unlimited paper currency, it would be able to do business on credit alone.

The stock was slowly subscribed, and for nearly two years it was quoted below par. Other means were used to excite popular confidence, and to build up the great enterprises in which Law wished to concentrate the energies and the wealth of France. In 1718, the monopoly of the manufacture of tobacco was granted to the company for nine years;[1] 4,000,000 livres annually were paid for the privilege, twice the amount formerly received by the government. The smallness of the sum shows how moderate was the consumption of tobacco at this period. The demand steadily increased, but its use was still vigorously condemned, and was not very generally adopted.

The purchase of the tobacco monopoly was followed by a series of transactions, each of which increased

[1] Edict, September, 1718; *Arrêt*, September 27.

the excitement of the public, and made every one eager for a share in these gigantic enterprises, no matter at what price. The East India Company of France, often reduced to ruin, and as often remodeled and resuscitated by the government, had continued a feeble and sickly existence. Its commercial privileges, while they excluded others from competition, had been exercised without advantage to itself or to the country. A small business with India and the East continued to be done, with results equally unsatisfactory to stockholders, colonists, and natives. The place of this decrepit institution was now taken by a young and vigorous rival. A royal edict declared that the Company of the East Indies had been provided with insufficient capital, and had suffered from unwise management; its debts were unpaid, its ships were rotting, and its existence was unprofitable. Its property and commercial privileges were therefore transferred to the Mississippi Company, upon the condition that all outstanding indebtedness should be discharged, and the same disposition was made of the Company of China.[1] The name of the Company of the West was now changed to the Company of the Indies, but it still continued to be called the Mississippi by contemporaries, and by that name is familiar to posterity.

The consolidation of these great enterprises was in accordance with Law's theory for the greatest development of national wealth. Such a company, he said, would furnish an opportunity to put all the money of the kingdom to an advantageous use. The profits of the corporation, distributed among innumerable stockholders, would make them all rich. By the union of all into one body, each member enjoyed the protection

[1] Edicts of May 26, 1719.

of the others; each individual profited by that which was of general advantage; the interests which were discordant when divided would become harmonious when united. All would work for a common end. An enormous capital united in one corporation, controlling the markets of the world, trafficking in every land, sailing its ships on every sea, would produce results which would be proportionate to the magnitude of the undertaking. Compared with its profits, those of the boasted East India Company of Holland would seem contemptible.[1]

No business corporation in the world had such vast possibilities before it as the new Company of the Indies. In addition to the empire which it already possessed in the West, it was given a monopoly of the commerce of France with the East. To it America, Asia, and Africa must pay tribute. In the oceans that rolled from the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan, from the Antipodes to the Arctic Circle, its ships alone could carry the flag of France. It had the facilities and the opportunities for building up a great trade with India, China, Senegal, and the islands of the sea; it could supply civilization with everything that could be desired for comfort, luxury, or caprice, from spices to slaves, from silks delicately wrought and richly colored by ingenious artisans of Hindustan to cloths woven out of the bark of trees by savages of Polynesia.

Having thus secured the control of the colonial system, Law next turned his attention to the administration of the finances of the government. In July, 1719,

[1] See these arguments in a pamphlet reproduced in *Journal de la Régence*, MS. Bib. Nat., a most valuable authority for the sentiments as well as the events of this era.

the privilege of coinage was granted the Company of the Indies for nine years. On this occasion, as on many others, Law dealt with the state with an injudicious liberality: 50,000,000 livres were to be paid for the privilege, which was an excessive price. It was, however, a valuable franchise, and the public regarded the profits to be made from it, and gave little attention to what it cost.

A measure of much more importance soon followed. The Paris brothers were men who, from a humble beginning, had become large government contractors. Whether from jealousy, or from a well-founded distrust of Law's measures, they were his bitter enemies and persistently attacked his projects. In 1718, the brothers had obtained for a term of years the contract for the principal taxes farmed by the government, for which they agreed to pay 48,500,000 livres annually. In imitation of the Company of the West, an association was formed to which the contract was assigned, and shares to the amount of 100,000,000 were issued. Law's projects were already known as the System, and this soon came to be styled the Anti-system. The profits of the farm of the taxes were large, and they were regarded as more certain than the products of Louisiana mines and sugar plantations. The shares of the Anti-system commanded higher figures than those of the Mississippi, and attracted the money of investors.

Law was now strong enough to overthrow his rivals. The India Company offered to pay 52,000,000 livres for the farm of the taxes. A gain of over 3,000,000 a year the regent claimed was sufficient to justify him in canceling the contract with the Paris brothers, and on August 27, 1719, a new one was executed with

Law's company.[1] The profits to be derived from the farm, even at this increased figure, added to the already glowing hopes of the stockholders of the Mississippi, while the business energies of the state by this change were still further concentrated in one enormous corporation. Into it would now pour alike the moneys contributed by the taxpayer and the moneys paid for foreign goods by the consumer. From it they would again be drawn to stimulate trade, increase wealth, and yield abundant returns to the investor.

And now Law proceeded to his last great financial measure, which was intended to bring into the development of his system the bulk of the capital of France available for investment. The amount of the national debt outstanding, and represented by rentes and other government obligations, was now about 1,500,000,000 livres. This sum the India Company offered to advance to the king at three per cent.[2] Thus he would have but one creditor, and that the company organized under his protection, and representing the business industries of the country. The interest on the present indebtedness was on an average four per cent., and there would be a saving of 15,000,000 annually for the taxpayers. The advantage of such an arrangement for the government was manifest, and the offer was promptly accepted. The creditors of the state were informed that their indebtedness would be at once discharged.[3] Such an operation was a gigantic one for that epoch. Industrial enterprises did not furnish the opportunities for investment which ex-

[1] *Arrêt*, August 27, 1719.

[2] The sum offered was first 1,200,000,000 livres, and that was increased to 1,500,000,000 in October.

[3] *Arrêt*, August 31, 1719.

ist in modern communities, and a large portion of the floating capital of the country was put in the securities of the government. If they were not sure to be paid, they were at least safer than anything else. The enormous sum placed in them was now to be repaid, and the creditors of the state must at once seek new investments. It was, however, part of the scheme that an opening should be furnished by which the money received from the government could be placed alike more to the advantage of the community and of the creditor. "The intention of the company," wrote Law, "is that the rentiers shall invest the money they receive in the shares which are now offered to them at less than their value. Thus they will be enriched while the state is relieved."[1] Money placed in the rentes, he said again, was unproductive and dead; the holders of such securities had been drones in the community, but now their capital, fructifying in the enterprises of industry and commerce, would increase the national wealth. The talents which had been hidden in the earth would be put to the exchangers and gain other talents.

The payment, or rather the funding, of the national debt, was an operation which Law was perhaps forced to undertake, in order to obtain the farm of the taxes. But it was in accordance with his theories, and he agreed to it willingly. Its boldness attracted him, and its necessary result was to increase the speculation in the shares of the Mississippi. As to the real nature of the transaction, however, a juggle of words deceived the public and the man who uttered them. The money which had been slumbering unprofitably in the obligations of the state was invested in the stock

[1] *Lettres sur le nouveau système des finances.*

of the company, only to be put again to the same use. New actions were issued, and the money received from them, to the amount of 1,500,000,000 livres, was lent to a government which often repudiated its debts, at a lower rate of interest than could usually be obtained by governments which always paid their debts. The capital of the company, on which dividends had to be earned, was enormously increased in order to make a loan at three per cent. This measure had much to do in bringing to an untimely end establishments which might have long continued useful to France.

To float such enterprises a large amount of money was required. The means of furnishing it was at hand. No one in France had occasion to complain that the volume of currency was not sufficient for the requirements of business. The government held the source of supply, and it was turned on in a steadily increasing stream. The establishment of the royal bank was followed by a liberal issue of paper money. In the spring of 1719, the amount outstanding was over 100,000,000 livres. In June and July, nearly 300,000,000 more of bills were issued. Those who advocated the regulation of the amount of currency by the state had an opportunity of seeing their system in full operation. Enormous as were these issues, they seem modest in comparison with those required as the development of the system progressed.

Something more than a government printing-press was needed to fan the flames of speculation. Law proceeded with increased vigor to put in operation his schemes for colonization and for foreign commerce. In May, 1719, the Company of the West had twenty-one ships carrying its flag; colonists in considerable numbers were sent to Louisiana; twenty thousand

skins of the buffalo and the beaver had been collected; the tobacco crop was promising, the prospects for a steady development of the resources of the Mississippi valley seemed flattering. Had not a wild speculation suddenly invested the company in a blaze of glory, to be followed by an era of ruin, it is not improbable that the efforts of Law might have materially modified the future of the Southern and even of the Western States of America. On the Mississippi, as in India, it was the fortune of France to be early in the field, to have the control of those great territories almost within her grasp, and to surrender them to a more active and sagacious rival.

As the speculation in the shares of the Mississippi Company became active, the reports from Louisiana grew every day more golden. The attempts at colonization of the new territory were made in a manner to attract and to delight the public. Some serious endeavors at developing the resources of the colony had been undertaken. Large tracts of land were taken by prominent persons, and they sent out bodies of settlers to occupy their possessions. Settlements were started in various parts of the country. Law himself took a reservation in Arkansas, and sent there a colony of Germans. They settled near the Arkansas River, on a plain surrounded by great forests. They were thrifty men, the most of them had taken their wives with them; and their efforts bade fair to be attended by permanent results. The subsequent overthrow of Law's fortunes discouraged the colony, and it was abandoned. The Germans established themselves near New Orleans, and the most of them found a prosperous career as market gardeners.[1]

[1] Accounts of the settlements and their fate are found in a

In 1717, the foundations of the city of New Orleans, named in honor of the regent, were laid by the commander of the province. It soon became a town of some size. Many of the huts and wooden houses which were first erected were replaced by brick, and had it not been for the disastrous fortunes of the Mississippi Company, New Orleans would doubtless at an early day have become a place of importance.[1]

It was difficult to find settlers in sufficient numbers, and Law resorted to the aid of the government. An edict allowed vagabonds, tramps, and domestics out of employment for four days, to be sent as colonists to Mississippi.[2] As women were greatly needed, the hospitals and prisons for those of disorderly life were ransacked in order to furnish the mothers of a new race. The arrival of the first boat-load of girls was an event long remembered in the colony. They were kept together under strict guard, but the men were allowed to inspect them and select wives to their taste. The colonists were easily pleased, and the whole cargo was immediately demanded in matrimony. Two men claimed the last woman left, and desired to settle their pretensions by a hand-to-hand encounter, upon the understanding that the bride should belong to the conqueror. Such heroic methods were forbidden, and the matter was decided by lot.[3] The wives who had been so eagerly sought for did not always prove as satisfactory as had been hoped. The lives which many of them had led at home had not fitted them to be

Mémoire sur la Louisiane, written by a French officer who for many years resided in the province.

[1] *Mém. sur la Louisiane*, 46 *et pas.*

[2] MS. *Journal de la Regence*, ii. 812 ; *Déclr.*, June 8, 1719.

[3] *Mém. sur la Louisiane.*

useful members of the community in any land. A second ship-load was disposed of with much less rapidity; still the most of them at last found homes.[1]

It was then decided to send out married colonists, but in its haste the company contented itself with many of questionable character. On September 18, 1719, one hundred and eighty girls were married at St. Martin des Champs to as many lads released from prison. The ringing of the bells in the section attracted great crowds to see so novel a ceremony. The girls were allowed to choose their husbands from those presented, and the priests then proceeded to unite the throng before them and pronounce the benediction of the church. Matrimony under the auspices of the Mississippi Company was on a large scale. The one hundred and eighty new couples paraded through the streets of Paris, but whether to symbolize their relation, or from fear of some attempt at escape, a small chain bound together each husband and wife. Another party of newly married couples, with better taste, were allowed to parade themselves adorned with chains of flowers instead of iron. They were taken to La Rochelle, and from there sent to begin a new life in Louisiana.[2] A few days later thirty carts, "filled with girls of moderate virtue," says the chronicler, all decked with ribbons and cockades, were driven through the city, preparatory to their departure.[3] Complaints came back of the conduct of some of these recruits,

[1] *Mém. sur la Louisiane.*

[2] *Journal de la Régence*, ii. 1068, MS. Bib. Nat. This contemporary journal has recently been published, but with so many and so injudicious omissions that any student of the time had best consult the MS.

[3] *Ib.* 1068.

and Law himself visited the hospital of the Salpêtrière, selected a number of boys and girls of good character, and promised a dowry to each couple who would marry and make Louisiana their home.

Another marriage attracted still more attention among a people fond of novelties. A party of Indians from Missouri, together with the daughter of the chief of the tribe, were induced by a French officer to accompany him to Paris. They were objects of the greatest interest both to the court and to the city. The men hunted a stag in the Bois de Boulogne, and performed Indian dances at the Italian theatre. The girl was baptized at Notre Dame. Her conversion was soon followed by her marriage. A sergeant named Dubois aspired to the hand of the Indian princess, and obtained it. They were married at Notre Dame with great pomp, and in the presence of an enormous multitude. The king sent gifts to the bride, the courtiers followed his example. The Indian warriors were made happy with blue coats adorned with gold lace, and with embroidered hats. The adventurous sergeant was made commander of Missouri, and set sail with his new compatriots. The conversion and civilization of the chief and the tribe were confidently anticipated from this auspicious alliance. Such hopes were doomed to be disappointed. The Indian princess wearied of the sergeant. No sooner had Mme. Dubois, as she was called at Paris, reached her home, than at her instigation both the sergeant and all of the garrison were murdered by the savages. The princess renounced alike a Christian husband and Christianity, and became again a squaw. The French settlement came to an end.[1]

[1] *Mém. sur la Louisiane*, 76–81.

The reports of the fabulous wealth which existed in the valley of the Mississippi attracted investors, if they did not always secure colonists. There could be found, it was said, mines of every sort. Mountains were filled with gold and silver; as these metals were common, and the savages did not know their value, they could be obtained at absurdly low prices. An old map of the territory of Louisiana shows numerous mines, which have not yet been discovered, almost two centuries later. On the map also appears, in small letters, a remote and obscure post, called Chicagou, where now is the second city of the American Union.

There was no limit to the credulity of those who were eager for hidden treasures. It was reported that far up the Arkansas River was an enormous rock of emerald, of fabulous value. An expedition was fitted out to discover it and bring it away. Under the command of an officer, some twenty men went up the Mississippi as far as the Arkansas, and then followed the course of that stream, journeying in all over seven hundred miles. They traversed rivers and forests which no white man had ever seen, but they found no emerald rock. At last the soldiers mutinied, and the commander was compelled to turn back. "If we had not the satisfaction of finding the rock," writes a member of the expedition, "we traversed a beautiful country, with a fertile soil, and saw vast prairies covered with deer and buffalo." [1]

Prints showed still more graphically the condition of the country. In one, troops of savages were seen reverently bowing before a party of Frenchmen landing from their ships. In another, the Indians were

[1] Memoir written by one of the explorers, 69 *et seq.*

kneeling before a Jesuit priest and crying for baptism.[1] A Jesuit, who had himself been a missionary in the West, wrote with less enthusiasm. "Any of these savages," he said, "would be baptized ten times a day for a glass of brandy."[2] Other observers discovered little that resembled Christianity among the Indians, but it was remarked, as an encouraging sign, that one trace of true religious belief was found among them, for they had some knowledge of the existence of the Devil.[3]

While multitudes were risking their fortunes in the stock of the Company of the West, few of them had the least knowledge of the resources, or even the situation, of the country which was to make them rich. A contemporary writer, when the shares were selling at 2,000 per cent., declared Louisiana to be a newly discovered island, which was ordinarily called Mississippi.[4] A pamphleteer described the territory for the benefit of the ladies of the court, and said that few of them probably knew whether the Mississippi was a continent, an island, or a river.[5]

It is now time to examine the extraordinary speculation which was excited by the new and gigantic enterprises in which the community was asked to invest its money. The responsibility for the follies of the Rue Quincampoix must rest to a large extent on Law himself, though the enormous rise in the price of shares doubtless exceeded his expectations and his desires.

[1] Many of these old prints can be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

[2] *Voyage de Hennequin*, 278.

[3] *Description du Mississippi*, p. 29.

[4] *Journal de la Régence*, iii. 1148.

[5] *Description du Mississippi*, published in 1720.

His enterprises were crushed under the weight of the fantastic value which the public attributed to them. In the endeavor to sustain prices which anticipated fifty years of prosperous commerce, his great schemes were brought to speedy ruin. Law unloosed the genius of speculation, and it at once assumed a form so monstrous as to terrify its master and the world.

The shares of the Mississippi were for some time viewed with distrust by a community that had little taste for foreign ventures. In the spring of 1719, almost two years after the organization of the company, they were quoted at about 300 livres, the par value being 500. In order to prove his own faith and excite public confidence, Law made a contract to take 200 shares at par in six months from date, and deposited 40,000 livres to secure his engagement. Dealings in futures were then almost unknown, and such a venture filled the public with amazement. In one respect Law's bargain was far from being sagacious; for if the shares were to possess such a value in the near future, it would have been much more profitable to buy them outright at the low price at which they were offered. But as a stock-jobbing operation it has had few parallels in the history of speculation. It was at once known that the manager of the Company of the West was willing to take its stock six months in the future, at a price almost double that which it then commanded. If he made such a purchase, it must be because he knew of the gains that it was sure to realize, and of the further privileges with which the king purposed to endow it. The price of shares at once advanced, and the public began to seek for an investment that seemed destined to increase rapidly in value. The volume of currency had been so augmented that money

was plenty, the rate of interest had become almost nominal, and the conditions existed for an active demand for any security which promised a liberal dividend.

The social and economical conditions of society explain also, to some extent, the speculation which raged for almost a year, and which now seems like a temporary insanity. Anything corresponding to a modern stock exchange was unknown in France. Business was not sufficiently developed, nor was there enough of accumulated wealth, to require any institution for the rapid transfer of values. Laws and social traditions rendered any change in a man's place in the community far more difficult than now, and the acquisition of large wealth seemed as unlikely to those of small means as that a miracle should be wrought in their behalf. The eagerness for wealth was as strong then as now, — as strong as it is in all countries where civilization is sufficiently developed to furnish comforts and luxuries to those who can buy them. The greed for money in all classes of society, from dukes to day-laborers, was quite as intense as it is in any modern republic which is supposed to be wholly absorbed in the love of dollars. The prospect of any improvement in their fortunes seemed so remote to most of the community that they appeared resigned to their fate; but it was not because they had less desire for money than their descendants, but because they had less hope of obtaining it. Those to whom its acquisition was possible pursued wealth quite as eagerly as is done at present, and were less scrupulous as to the means.

The new enterprises of Law, and the profits made by those who began to deal in the shares of the Mississippi Company, came as a revelation to the com-

munity. We are familiar with men who have made rapid fortunes in speculation. Then they seemed rare and curious phenomena. Eras of panic and revulsion have taught modern operators some degree of moderation, even in the season of most buoyant speculation. Those who rushed to gamble in the Rue Quincampoix had had no such experience. They were ignorant of the devices of the bulls of the exchange, and had no fear of the bears. For a while, whoever bought shares made a profit. Reports of fortunes gained, not only by bankers and princes, but by valets and errand boys, excited the community. It seemed as if a river of gold had begun to flow, and one needed only to help himself. Law claimed that new sources of wealth had been discovered; it might well be, therefore, that the past could furnish no precedent for an unknown future. "The gates of wealth," he wrote to those who complained that vulgar adventurers had become suddenly wealthy, "are now open to all the world. It is that which distinguishes the fortunes of the old administration from those of the present." [1] It is not strange that, under these circumstances, a speculation should have raged such as history seldom has to record.

The various operations which were undertaken by the Mississippi Company were accompanied by large issues of stock, and resulted in an unparalleled speculation in its shares. As has been said, these were still below par in the spring of 1719. Owing to the increase in the circulation, favorable reports from Louisiana, and the confidence which was inspired by Law's operations, in May the price reached par, or 500 livres per share. In that month the rights and property of the companies of the East Indies and of

[1] Letter in *Mercure de France* for May, 1720.

China were transferred to the Mississippi. In order to provide capital for these new enterprises, it was authorized to issue additional stock to the amount of 25,000,000 livres, in shares of which the par value should be 500. These new shares would necessarily be on an equality with those already outstanding, and the prospects of the company were so flattering that the former were now quoted above par. It was just that new subscribers should pay a premium for the stock to be issued, which should represent the difference between its nominal and its real value. It was therefore announced that for the new shares of 500 livres 550 livres must be paid, a premium of ten per cent.[1]

In the other steps which he took in reference to these new issues, Law probably intended only to secure their popularity and a prompt subscription. They had, however, a great effect in stimulating speculation. Buying on margins, which is now a common procedure in every exchange, furnishes a method by which small operators can hope for a considerable gain. The market is thus broadened to a great extent, and some such system seems necessary for active speculation. These devices were unknown to the merchants and bankers who did business in the days of Louis XIV., but an opportunity for large profits on small investments was now furnished through the subscriptions to the Company of the Indies. The shares were made payable in twenty monthly installments of five per cent. each. On depositing the premium and one payment of five per cent., any one could subscribe. The chance of a large profit at small risk attracted a multitude of speculators. The shares began to rise with phenomenal ra-

[1] Edict, May, 1719.

pidity. Before the second payment was due, they were quoted at 1,000. On an investment of 75 livres, there was a net profit of 450, or 600 per cent., in less than two months.[1] When the public was already excited by such fluctuations, another regulation increased many fold the volume of speculation. On the plausible ground that the benefit of these golden opportunities should be reserved for those who were already shareholders, it was provided that those only could subscribe for a share of the additional stock who held four shares of that which had been issued. New enterprises were announced almost monthly, it was evident that the capital must be still further increased, and the whole community was eager to participate. The original shares were sought after, that the holder might be in position to subscribe for further extensions. The first shares were called the mothers, while those of the second issue were styled the daughters. The family increased rapidly in numbers. In July, the right of coinage was obtained. To furnish the 50,000,000 livres to be paid the king for this privilege, 50,000 new shares were issued. The par value was 500 livres, but the market price was now 1,000. These were therefore issued at 1,000, and at this figure they yielded the required 50,000,000. Subscriptions were made payable in installments; but in order to participate, one must be the possessor of four mothers and one daughter for each share of increased stock.[2] Shares of this issue were called the grand-daughters, and they were sought after more eagerly than their

[1] A payment of 75 livres secured a share of 400 issued at 550. This was soon quoted at 1,000. Deducting the 475 unpaid, the speculator received 525 for his share, or 450 livres profit.

[2] *Arrêt*, June 30 and July 27, 1719.

parents had been. Twenty days were allowed for the subscription, and it was more than enough.

The speculation which had raged all the summer received its final impetus from the purchase of the farm of taxes by the company, and the preparations for the payment of the government debt. The shares were quoted above 1,000 livres in July, but on the announcement of these measures they rose with bewildering rapidity. In September, they sold at 5,000. On the 13th of that month the company announced the issue of 100,000 new shares. They were still of the nominal value of 500 francs, but, to correspond with the market price which had been attained, subscribers were required to pay 5,000 francs, or 1,000 per cent. At this price enough would be realized to pay one third of the sum to be furnished the king. On the 28th, 100,000 shares were issued at the same price, and on October 2, 100,000 more. Thus the amount required for the use of the king would be supplied. Lest the eagerness of the public might be affected by the magnitude of these subscriptions, it was announced that the capital of the company was now completed, and no further issues would be allowed.[1]

A great sum of money was required for the discharge of its debts by the government, even though this should ultimately find its way into the coffers of the company in payment of subscriptions of stock. In the last six months of 1719, bills were issued by the royal bank to the amount of over 800,000,000 livres. Such an inflation of the currency counteracted any effect that might have been produced by the enormous increase of the stock of the company. The

[1] Twenty-four thousand actions were issued on October 4, apparently without authority of the royal council.

demand for shares exceeded anything that had yet been seen, and the closing months of the year 1719 witnessed the culmination of the great Mississippi Bubble. The new issues were payable in ten monthly installments. Five hundred livres secured the chance of profiting on the rise of a stock which had advanced from 1,000 to 5,000 livres in two months.

The magnificent buildings occupied by the bank and the India Company filled the great square which is at present used for the National Library. Tranquil and usually impecunious scholars are now found where, in the time of Law, speculators counted their millions, dukes and princes crowded to ask for shares, and great multitudes surged in the courts, eager to become rich in a day.

There the bureaus for subscription were opened. The rows of would-be subscribers reached far into the adjoining streets, and during long hours the phalanx slowly advanced. When a stentorian voice announced that the bureau was closed for the day, or, what was far worse, that the subscription list was filled, those who had not yet reached the wicket went sorrowfully away.

Persons of more importance sought to obtain the opportunity for gain through influence and solicitation. The financial revolution of Law, like the political revolution of 1789, leveled all distinctions of rank. The greatest nobles showed an avidity for gain which was not surpassed by any lackey or coachman who became rich on the Rue Quincampoix. The only difference was, that operators of rank insisted they should suffer no loss, and the company later in its career was compelled to spend enormous amounts in taking stock at the highest figures from those who

had held it too long.[1] Law was a new man, and he felt that he must have the support of the aristocracy to maintain his position. Few asked for favors who did not receive them. The Duke of Bourbon, the head of the Condé family, was one of the most eager in the pursuit of gain, and Law used his power to enable the duke to make millions. The palace of Chantilly was improved and decorated with money made from the Mississippi.

The bureau of the director of the company rivaled the levée of a monarch in the distinction and in the number of those who frequented it. Women as well as men paid court to one who seemed to have the power to make rich whomever he pleased. It was said that a duchess kissed his hand in public, and at that time duchesses were further removed from the rest of the world than they are now.[2]

The rapid increase in apparent wealth furnished an excuse for the prodigality to which the regent was by nature inclined. The pension list was greatly enlarged. The Duke of St. Simon tells of pensions amounting to over half a million livres created in one year, in addition to six millions given in round sums; "besides," he adds, "money given to so many others that I don't know if they could be numbered." "Seeing such depredation," continues the duke, "I asked for an increase of 12,000 livres a year in my own allowance, and obtained it at once." [3]

It was at the Rue Vivienne that subscriptions were struggled for and shares given away. The speculation found its headquarters in another section. The

[1] *Mém. Justificatifs*, 645.
[2] *Mém. de la duchesse d'Orléans*, i. 140.
[3] *Mém.*, xvi. 439.

famous Rue Quincampoix, beyond the new Boulevard de Sebastopol, has been less affected by change than most of the streets of Paris. It still follows a meandering course between high, irregular, and melancholy buildings, and in some parts is not over twelve feet broad. It is occupied by shops where nothing seems to be sold, and by residents who appear to have no money with which to buy. At one end is the Rue des Ours, whose name is said to be a corruption of Rue des Oies, or Goose Street, because here, when this part of the city was the centre of business, geese were cooked for the merchants and financiers. Off from the Rue Quincampoix runs the still narrower Rue de Venise, with lofty houses on either side. In them bankers and men of wealth lived in the days when air and light were regarded as superfluities, and odors were not thought to be objectionable. The Rue de Venise is now one of the darkest and dirtiest streets of Paris.

The Rue Quincampoix had been the resort for men dealing in government obligations, and the speculation in the securities of Law's companies centred there. This street soon became the recognized place for such transactions, and in the days of the highest excitement it presented a scene such as could be witnessed nowhere else in the world. There were no brokers' offices, and persons dealing in the stocks met and trafficked in the highway. The cries of those wishing to buy or sell went up like a hoarse roar from a multitude so dense that it was often difficult to work one's way through. The street resembled a modern stock exchange, except that the number of operators was many times greater, they were selling their own property and not that of others, they were controlled by no rules

as to the conduct of business, and the fluctuations exceeded those of the most exciting days of modern speculation. The people dwelling in the houses along the street found it impossible to get any sleep, and upon their complaint traffic was forbidden except during the hours of daylight. This regulation was enforced by putting railings at either end of the street. At eight in the morning the drums sounded, the gates were opened, and the multitude poured in.[1] The plebeians usually came by the Rue des Ours. More aristocratic operators descended from their carriages at the other end, in the Rue Aubry le Boucher. The street itself was so narrow that only persons on foot were allowed upon it.

There could be found those of every rank and occupation. Princes and priests, doctors of the Sorbonne and shaven friars, mingled with money-shavers, shopkeepers, valets, and coachmen.[2] Women jostled for shares with the men. Ladies of fashion went there, as they went to the opera. The cafés were full of gentlemen and ladies, who sipped their wine, played quadrille, and sent out servants to execute their orders. The owners of houses on the street grew rich from the enormous rents which they obtained. Money was gained with such rapidity that those plying the humblest trades received exorbitant compensation. Bargains were made in the open air, and as the parties were often unknown to each other the transfers were made at once. A cobbler put chairs in his little shed, and had pen and ink ready for those who wished to seat themselves and close a bargain. He sometimes gained as much as 200 livres a day. A hunchback

[1] *Journal de la Régence*, ii. 1100.
[2] *Ib.*, ii. 1092.

availed himself of his deformity, and furnished a temporary desk for those who wished to write. He pleased the crowd, and became rich from what was given him. A soldier blessed with extraordinarily broad shoulders offered himself for the same service, and was largely patronized. More judicious than many of those who had scrawled contracts for millions upon his back, he invested his earnings in a little piece of property in the country, and there passed the rest of his life in comfort. Men who had made thousands in an hour spent them as recklessly as a miner who has struck gold. Absurd prices were paid. A speculator who had just cleared 50,000 livres gave 200 for a fat roast pullet for his dinner.[1]

The fortunes made in the Rue Quincampoix drew speculators from every part of Europe. A more cosmopolitan crowd was never seen than that which there jostled, shouted, and bargained. Thirty thousand foreigners were in Paris during the autumn of 1719 in search of fortune, besides the hosts that came from all parts of France.[2] So great was the eagerness to reach the city that seats in the coaches from such towns as Lyons, Bordeaux, and Brussels were engaged long in advance. Fabulous prices were given for a place, and those who could not go to Paris and buy shares speculated in seats on the stagecoach.[3]

There were frequent and violent reactions on the Rue Quincampoix, but prices advanced with enormous ra-

[1] *Histoire du Système*, ii. 158, 159.

[2] *Journal de la Régence*, iii. 1114. The number of strangers in the city is put by some at 500,000, and even much higher. In Paris at that time it would have been impossible to furnish accommodations of any sort to one half of that number.

[3] *Journal de la Régence*, iii. 1114.

pidity. For eight months there continued what would now be called a bull market, and the quotations of shares gained on an average over ten points a day. Every one was crazy with excitement long before the culmination of the speculation. In May, shares of 500 livres were quoted at par. In July, they had reached 1,000. When the new issues were made in September, they were selling at 5,000. In November, they reached 10,000.[1] They soon rose to 12,000 and 15,000; there were many sales at those figures, and even higher.[2] It is said that as much as 20,000 livres was paid for a share of which the par value was 500.[3] This was 4,000 per cent. The highest prices were obtained in December and January, but though the market ceased to advance, there was no rapid decline. Shares fluctuated between 10,000 and 15,000 livres, with some sales at even higher figures, from November, 1719, until February, 1720.

Such a rise furnished the opportunity for fabulous gains. A man who had taken one of the original shares, and paid for it in bills of the state at sixty per cent. discount, could get 15,000 livres for what cost him 200. Twenty thousand livres placed in shares in the latter part of 1718 would have realized nearly 2,000,000 a year later. A speculator who subscribed

[1] Dutot, 989; *Journal de la Régence.*

[2] *Journal de la Régence* for January 5, 1720. It is said that shares sold on that day at 18,000.

[3] *Histoire du Système*, ii. 87. If such a price was ever paid, it was exceptional. Law gives 13,500 as about the highest figure. Few shares were sold above 15,000. Different amounts were unpaid on the different issues, and this makes many of the quotations misleading. The fact that there was no official record of transactions, and that the fluctuations were so violent, renders it impossible to ascertain the highest figures realized.

for a share in October, 1719, and sold in November, made 1,000 per cent. on his investment in a month.

The fluctuations were so rapid that fortunes were made on small ventures, and sometimes without risking anything. Agents were sent to sell shares at the last quotation. By the time they reached the street there was often a sufficient advance for them to realize a handsome profit in addition, which they kept for themselves. A servant was ordered to sell for his master two hundred and fifty shares at 8,000. He found a purchaser at 10,000, kept the 500,000 surplus for himself, began dealing in the street, and in a few days was a millionaire.[1] A man who was sent to make a payment bought some shares with the money, and went into a restaurant for his dinner. When he returned to the street two hours later, prices had advanced eleven per cent. He sold the shares at a profit of 40,000 livres, paid the debt, and pocketed the gain.[2]

The community was startled to see men of the most humble position suddenly become enormously rich. A valet was said to have made fifty millions, a bootblack forty, and a restaurant-waiter thirty. The word "millionaire," which has since become so familiar both in French and English, was first used to describe the Mississippian who had suddenly grown wealthy. Among all the operators, the one who accumulated the greatest fortune was a woman named Chaumont. She was a widow living at Namur, and came to Paris in the hope of collecting a sum of money, the loss of which bade fair to ruin her. Her debtor offered her only the paper of the state, which was then at sixty

[1] Such anecdotes may be exaggerated, but gains were often so sudden and so enormous that they might well be possible.

[2] *Journal de la Régence*, iii. 1096.

per cent. discount. Despairing of better terms, she accepted this. The shares of the Mississippi Company were offered for subscription, payable in this paper, and she put all that she had received into the venture. Three years later her wealth was estimated at 100,000,000 francs. She was assessed 8,000,000 by the government, paid it promptly, and remained rich, while many of her associates were again as poor as before the name of the Mississippi was heard in Paris.[1]

Sudden wealth like this brought corresponding extravagance. The tales of the Arabian Nights seemed to become realities. The stories told of the splendor of the new millionaires sound fabulous, but they were probably little exaggerated. A former landscape painter was distinguished among his compeers by the Oriental magnificence of his life. He purchased diamonds which the king of Portugal had ordered, but had not the ready money to pay for; eighty horses stood in his stables, ninety servants waited at his chateau; only gold and silver plate was seen upon his table. It was furnished with equal splendor each day for a great number of guests, even when the master was unable to be with them. The feasts of Lucullus were said to have been neither more splendid nor more curious.

The widow Chaumont, though less ingenious in new devices, dispensed as bountiful a hospitality. At her chateau at Ivry, an ox, two calves, six sheep, and fowls without number were every day consumed by retinues of friends and servants. Champagne and burgundy flowed without restraint.[2] Another Mis-

[1] *Journal de Marais*, ii. 353; *Histoire du Visa*, vol. ii.; *Journal de la Régence*, 1721.

[2] *Journal de la Régence*, iii. 1044.

sissippian obtained for his two-year-old daughter a promise of marriage from a marquis when she should reach the proper age. For this he had to pay the suitor 20,000 livres annually, with the promise of 4,000,000 when the time for the marriage arrived. The marquis received his 20,000 a year until the failure of his prospective father-in-law released him from his bargain. "The babies of the Mississippians now cry for marquises instead of dolls," said a contemporary, when the proposed alliance was announced.[1]

Alike France and the rest of the world were deceived by this sudden vision of untold riches. The overburdened country of Louis XIV. seemed transformed into fairyland. The bills of the bank, of which a thousand millions were now in circulation, the shares of the Company of the Indies, at the absurd prices at which they were now selling, were thought to be so much added to the national wealth. A grave writer estimated that in November, 1719, the country was richer by five milliards than it had been a year before.[2] And yet this fabulous increase was represented only by a few settlements in Louisiana, and a few more ships trading with the East.

Other nations apprehended the commercial supremacy of France as much as, a few years before, they had feared the military power of Louis XIV. Visions of an empire sustained by commerce succeeded to those of an empire sustained by arms. The English ambassador, one of the most experienced and sagacious diplomats of the day, wrote to his government that the greatness of France would be based upon the ruin of England and Holland, that Law was a dangerous enemy, who intended to break the Bank

[1] *Journal de Marais*, i. 286. [2] Dutot, 989.

and the East India Company of England, and to destroy her government.[1] The ambassador was recalled because he was on unfriendly terms with the new financial autocrat.

The power which Law had acquired from the apparent success of his plans was used to benefit the country and to increase his own popularity. The company held 100,000,000 of the obligations of the government, on which four per cent. was to be paid. He offered voluntarily to reduce this to three per cent. upon the condition that the million thus saved should be used in reducing the taxes on some of the necessaries of life.[2] The control of the farms furnished an opportunity for other reformations. The fees of innumerable officials, whose positions had been created in order to be sold, added largely to the price of any article which it was their function to regulate or inspect. The inspectors received eleven pistoles on a fish which sold for twenty-eight, and this necessarily was paid by the consumer. A number of these offices were now abolished, to the delight of all except those who held them. The price of fish, wood, and coal in Paris was reduced one third by such changes.[3] These abuses unfortunately were restored after Law's fall. The good which he effected did not live after him.

Other reforms which he projected were more radical, and would have been still more beneficial, but he had no opportunity to put them in practice.[4] He

[1] *Letters of the Earl of Stair*, September 1, 9, 1719 ; February 4, March 12, 1720.

[2] *Arrêt*, September 19, 1719.

[3] *Journal de la Régence*, ii. 1058.

[4] Some of them are contained in a MS. *Mémoire*, June, 1719.

obtained, however, the transport of grain from one province to another free of duty.[1] His efforts in these directions were all in aid of liberty of commerce. It should be remembered to Law's credit that on such questions his views were far in advance of the age.

In addition to measures for the general advantage, Law gave with a magnificent liberality to charity, both public and private. The adulation which he received did not destroy the courtesy of his manner, though it perhaps affected the soundness of his judgment. The latter part of 1719 saw him at the height of his greatness. He was the most prominent figure in Europe. He visited the street, where millions were daily made out of his enterprises, and was received with an enthusiasm such as could hardly have been accorded to a sovereign.[2] His native town of Edinburgh sent the freedom of the city in a gold box to the Right Honorable John Law. The Chevalier of St. George, the head of the house of Stuart, wrote to ask his favor and his bounty.[3] He was declared to be a minister whose merits exceeded anything that the past had known, the present could conceive, or the future would believe.[4]

The services which he had rendered France deserved political recognition, but he was a Protestant, and the law forbade any office being held save by a Catholic. He decided to remove this obstacle. The choice which he made of a spiritual adviser was not

[1] *Arrêt*, October 28, 1719.

[2] *Journal de la Régence*, November, 1719.

[3] Pretender to Law, August 5, 1719. Law was generous to the fugitive prince, as he was to everybody, and sent him money.

[4] Cited in Wood's *Life of Law*.

judicious, for he selected the Abbé Tencin, a man whose morals were too bad even for the libertine age in which he lived. The abbé was, however, one of the emissaries of Dubois, and to this relationship he probably owed the opportunity for making an illustrious convert. In November, Law abjured the errors of Protestantism in the Church of San Roch. A magnificent dinner and ball celebrated the event. The abbé, who had been the instrument of the conversion, received shares worth 200,000 livres as a recompense.[1]

On January 5, 1720, Law was made comptroller general. He had reached the zenith of his fortunes; their decline was to be even more rapid than their rise.

Though the fabulous price of the shares of the company flattered Law's pride, and seemed to assure the prosperity which he had promised to create, he must have seen the dangers which this involved. As was justly said, a seven-story building had been erected on foundations that were only intended for three.[2] The figures at which shares sold were not based upon any earnings actually realized, or upon any dividends already paid. Instead of the price being regulated by the dividend, the director was obliged to regulate the dividend to suit the price. Doubtless he might have contented himself with paying what the company could earn and disregarding the quotations. But such a course would certainly have involved a severe fall in nominal values. Law feared the effect of that upon the bank and the company, as well as upon his own popularity. A rapid decline in the market would probably result in

[1] *Journal de la Régence*, November, 1719. [2] Dutot.

a panic, and his system might be ruined before there was sufficient time to establish and to develop it. His confidence in his own views had been increased by the events of the last few months, and his sanguine temperament led him to believe that the most rosy anticipations would ultimately be realized. It was not with any desire to sell his own shares that Law endeavored to sustain the market at the figures at which an excited public had carried it, but because he regarded this as in accordance with the financial principles of which he was the originator.

In July, when new shares were issued at 1,000, the directors of the company had declared that from January 1, 1720, dividends of twelve per cent. would be paid on the stock of the company, or six per cent. on the price at which it was then offered. It is possible that this could have been done, though only the future could assure it. To pay this would have required profits amounting to 18,000,000 livres, but with the additional issues of stock after July that sum would not yield a dividend of one half of one per cent. upon the increased capital. It was evident that new estimates must be made, and yet the only increase in the earning capacity of the company was in a profit of a few millions on the farm of the taxes, and a loan to the king at three per cent. In December, the stock consisted of 624,000 shares. This represented a great sum, even at the subscription price, but speculation had carried the quotations to two and three times the highest amount paid the company. At 10,000 a share, the capital represented 6,000,000,000 livres. To pay dividends at any rate which should sustain these quotations was impossible. In one respect, however, the enormous issue of bankbills made it easier

to support these prices. Law had extolled the advantages of a low rate of interest, and praised the condition of the Dutch, who could borrow at two per cent. France now seemed equally fortunate, for money was so plentiful that no more than one and one half per cent. could be obtained for its use. A low rate of interest that is the natural result of accumulated capital and security of investment has its advantages; but when its only cause is an excess of currency, it is temporary and injurious.

At the meeting of the directors in December, Law presented figures from which he claimed that the company could pay forty per cent. on the par value of its shares. It is unnecessary to analyze them. The profits which he anticipated could only have been earned after years of judicious and successful development of the business and resources of the company. Even then they would have yielded but two per cent. on the price of the stock in November, and it was advancing every day.[1]

No one examined the statement which Law presented. The directors voted that a forty per cent. dividend should be paid annually, and the public received this announcement with enthusiasm. In the early part of January the shares of the company commanded the highest price at which they ever sold.[2] The earnings, even if Law's golden anticipations had been realized, could have yielded little more than one per cent. on the value which the public put on the shares, and still speculators bought for a rise. But

[1] About one third of the issues of stock were then held by the king and the company, and on these no dividend was promised.

[2] *Journal de la Régence*, January, 1720.

the purchasers were now found among those classes who, in every community, make up their minds to invest when a speculation has culminated. The great operators felt that the end must come to the delusion, and began to seek other investments for their gains.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FAILURE OF THE SYSTEM.

1720–1721.

EARLY in November, many operators were convinced that it was time to realize their profits, and large amounts of stock began to be thrown on the market. The efforts made to sustain prices, and favorable statements as to the prospects of the company, prevented any serious fall. But symptoms of distrust in the new wealth which had been poured upon the community were manifested in various directions. In the height of the speculation, the bills of the bank had commanded a premium of ten per cent. over specie, because the company refused to receive gold or silver in payment of subscriptions.[1] This condition of affairs was short-lived. Though the apparent prosperity seemed unabated, many began to place their paper wealth in some form which should have a more solid basis. A few transferred their profits to other countries, but these were chiefly foreign speculators, who wished to put their gains out of danger. The most of those who realized on the securities of the company sought investments in France. A great rise of prices followed. Land was especially in demand. Owners who were willing to take their pay in paper

[1] *Arrêts* of September 22 and 25, 1719.

could obtain almost any figure which they saw fit to ask. Houses, chateaux, and farms sold at three and four times their former value. A property which had brought 700,000 livres a few months before was now sold for over 2,000,000.[1]

Another result of the inflation was more felt by the community at large. The prices of the necessaries of life were steadily rising. A loaf of bread usually sold at from one to two sous a pound. In June, it brought three sous. In December, it was selling at four and five sous.[2] The cost of meat, butter, and other provisions had advanced in the same proportion. This was less felt while money was plentiful, wages were high, and the bills of the bank were received without question. But in the early part of 1720 vendors began to look askance at parting with their property for paper; bills were practically, if not formally, at a discount; it was difficult to purchase with them, unless the buyer would offer a further augmentation of price.

Law now began a series of violent measures, by which he sought to sustain the tottering credit of his institutions. He succeeded only in making the ruin more complete, and in rendering his memory odious to the people. As the situation became more difficult, he wandered far from the principles of freedom in trade which he had advanced in his earlier writings, and which to some extent he had endeavored to put in execution in the days of his prosperity. He was not

[1] *Histoire des Sieurs de Tancarville.*

[2] These prices are noted by Buvat, who lived in Paris, in the journal which he kept during the regency. The letters of Laulès, the Spanish envoy in 1720, are graphic, and even pathetic, in their description of the prices which he was obliged to pay.

improved by adversity. When dukes and princes were dancing attendance, he had preserved a courteous manner and a calm demeanor; but when circumstances became adverse, when he was harassed by the disappointed and reviled by the mob, he grew morose, his remarks were ill-tempered, and his measures were exceedingly injudicious.[1] His position was one which he could only hope to hold by unbroken prosperity, and he now drifted from one folly to another. Many erroneous steps he advised, and others he appeared powerless to prevent.

The desire for investments that had an assured value, together with the extravagance resulting from sudden wealth, had induced great purchases of diamonds, plate, and jewelry of every sort. To prevent this, edicts prescribing Spartan simplicity were promulgated in a community that was reveling in Persian magnificence. Any person wearing diamonds or other precious stones, without written permission, was subject to a heavy penalty; goldsmiths were forbidden to make or sell plate, and the importation of these articles was prohibited. The only exemption was in favor of piety, for episcopal rings might still be purchased and worn.[2] The next attack was on the use of gold for currency. Not only were the bills of the bank declared a legal tender, but it was forbidden to make any payment in specie in excess of 100 francs, under a penalty of 3,000 livres.

This measure was followed by one still more tyrannical. It was urged by Law that only small payments could now be made in the precious metals, and so there could be no pretext for having large amounts in

[1] St. Simon, xvii. 164.

[2] *Arrêts*, February 4 and 18, 1720.

store. The men who were hoarding the silver and gold, which should be circulating in the street or on deposit with the bank must be forced to abandon their evil practices. In February, an edict forbade any person, of whatever rank or wealth, keeping with him gold or silver to the value of more than 500 livres. Those who offended against this provision were subjected to a penalty of 10,000 livres, and the money found in their possession was to be confiscated for the benefit of the informer. In order to enforce this regulation, the police, at the request of the directors of the India Company, might enter any house and search for the forbidden treasures.[1]

This edict was no idle form of words. Many were terrified into bringing their money to the bank, and accepted the credit of that institution for the gold which they no longer dared to hold. Rigorous search was made to discover the hidden stores of delinquents. The bounty offered to informers appealed to the worst passions, at a time when manners and morals were relaxed. Servants lodged informations against their masters, brothers against brothers, a son against his father.[2] When a charge had been made, or when suspicion existed, the officers suddenly took possession of the house. Floors were torn up, garrets ransacked, gardens ploughed and spaded, in search of the treasure. In many cases it was discovered. The information given by a treacherous kinsman or employee was usually correct.

Even religious establishments were not exempt from this tyranny. Several of the principal curés of Paris were visited, and money in excess of the sum per-

[1] *Arrêt*, February 27, 1720.

[2] This unnatural offense seems to be well authenticated.

mitted was found in their possession. It was in vain they pleaded that these were alms left with them for the use of the poor. "Then you should have given them to the poor," was the only answer they received, and the moneys were confiscated.[1] The odium of such inquisitorial proceedings was increased by the fact that the law was not equal for all. The regent reproached the Duke of Bourbon and the Prince of Conti for having taken millions in gold from the bank. The duke replied that he had taken the money, and they could find it if they wished. Commissioners went through the form of visiting his palace, but the search for the treasure of so powerful a nobleman was sure not to be rigorous. The duke kept his gold.[2]

These measures Law sought to defend. He denounced the realizers who had excited distrust by their ill-timed greed, and who were now seeking to hide the money which they had gained. It was against good morals, he said, to store away gold and silver which had been issued for the purposes of currency. It bore the image and superscription of the king; no man could have any further right over it than to pay it for the satisfaction of his tastes and desires; the use of it belonged to his fellow-citizens; it was the blood of the state; who checked its circulation committed a crime. Those who would await the future in confidence would escape loss, and in the mean time temporary coercion was justifiable, where this was for the interest of the people. They must be forced to become happy. The prince must lend a helping hand to the system, until it was strong enough to walk alone.[3]

[1] *Journal de la Régence*, March, 1720.

[2] *Ib.*, iii. 1220. See, also, St. Simon, xvi. 436, in reference to the Prince of Conti.

[3] Letter of March 11, 1720.

All these edicts and regulations had no effect except to make the situation worse. Law now resolved to do away with the use of silver and gold altogether, and to have paper the sole currency which should circulate in the community. On the 11th of March, an edict declared that the circulation was excessive, and the necessaries of life were at exorbitant prices. To check these evils it was enacted that, from the 1st of May following, gold should no longer be used in payment for any debt, nor silver after August 1st; no more of either metal should be coined; no one should have any in his possession, except goldsmiths, in such quantities as might be fitting.[1] France, for a short time, enjoyed the distinction of being the one civilized country where a man could not pay his debts with gold or silver, a state of affairs which had no parallel since mankind passed from the era of barter and chose the precious metals as the medium for exchange.

To prohibit the use of gold and silver was a departure from the principles on which Law's bank had been organized; it was not, perhaps, at variance with the vagaries in which he sometimes indulged. He had often dwelt on the inconvenience of the use of the precious metals for currency, and on the fluctuations which they suffered. The sovereign remedy for this evil, he wrote, was to have a sign of transmission which should possess no intrinsic value, and of which the quantity should be fixed by the state in accordance with the needs of trade. Paper was most fit for this use, and therefore it had been adopted in France; gold and silver, like wool and silk, could now be put to some useful purpose, instead of circulating from hand to hand; as the new signs of transmission would

[1] *Déclaration*, March 11, 1720.

have no intrinsic value, no one would be tempted to turn them from their proper office, which was to circulate. It was idle to ask what would be the fate of the last holder; their circulation would be established, and there would be no last holder.[1]

Almost twenty years before, Law had written that a state where it was possible to establish a currency having no intrinsic value, and of which the quantity should never be less than the needs of the country, would attain to power and wealth. France was now making the experiment. The supporters of the system claimed that the results would soon justify the measures which had been taken. Distrust would be dispelled. With business based upon credit, France could do without the metals which in other countries were thought to constitute wealth. A method to provide sufficient circulation had been discovered surer than the mines of Peru, and of which the results would be inexhaustible riches.[2]

The other steps taken by the government were even more extraordinary than banishing gold and silver from the country. Endeavors to sustain the prices of shares by purchases in the market, by highly colored statements, by an inflation of the currency, are methods often adopted. But Law now sought to fix their value at an absolute figure, and to turn the bank and the Company of the Indies into one great corporation, of which the two branches should be mutually self-sustaining. In February, the royal bank and the Company of the Indies were consolidated. Two weeks later, the value of the shares of the company was fixed

[1] *Lettres sur le nouveau système des finances*, May 18, 1720.

[2] MS. in Bib. Nat., said to have been written by the Abbé St. Pierre.

at 9,000 livres. A bureau of conversion was opened, where they were purchased at that price, and paid for in bills of the bank. On the other hand, any one who wished to buy could, when he pleased, present his 9,000 livres and receive a share. Thus Law hoped that he had at last secured tranquillity. The fall in the market would be checked; large owners, who were clamoring to be protected, would now feel at rest. When money was needed, holders would present their shares and obtain it; when they could find no use for their bills, they would seek a security on which they could receive dividends.

Very different results ensued. The market was still falling, and many gladly availed themselves of a purchaser which was obliged to take all that was offered. The company, which had received on its shares from 500 to 5,000 livres, now bought them back at 9,000. More than the wealth of the West and East Indies would have been required to sustain such an operation.[1] It was necessary to have more bills with which

[1] In the edict of June, 1725, the loss of the company by reason of its operations, chiefly in the purchase of shares, is stated at 1,470,000,000 livres. In the remonstrance interposed by the company in 1721 against being held responsible for the management of the bank, figures are given which are probably accurate. The total amount of purchases to sustain the market, and by virtue of the provisions of the edict of March, amounted to over 2,000,000,000. Of this amount, 587,000,000 were disbursed under the orders of the regent. This enormous sum represents the amount paid those who were preferred at the expense of the public, and either received a higher price than that fixed by the edict, or were paid for shares which had cost them nothing. See, also, Law's *Mémoires justificatifs*. The amounts of stock and moneys given away by the company to persons of influence were enough to bankrupt it. It was an age of jobbery.

to pay for the shares that were presented, and the currency was inflated to an extent which far exceeded the issues of the year before. The eagerness of holders to dispose of their stock was only checked by the fact that the notes which they received in payment were rapidly becoming worthless. The investor had to choose between an investment that would pay nothing and bills that would buy nothing.

Violences committed in the efforts at colonization increased the unpopularity of Law and his company. The French have never been inclined to seek a home in new countries. It would, indeed, have been possible to utilize the Huguenots. Many of them, like the English Puritans, would gladly have sought shelter in a new land, where they could enjoy the religious freedom that was denied them at home. In industry, intelligence, and integrity, they would have equaled the men who in New England laid the foundations of the American Republic. Such a colonization, which might have done much for the expansion of France, was prevented by the bigotry of the government. The descendants of Louis XIV., like their ancestor, insisted that their colonies should be settled by Catholics, or not settled at all.

Different methods were adopted to obtain emigrants, and were enforced with harshness and injustice. By law, vagabonds and those out of employment might be arrested and transported to Louisiana. A reward was offered for each person thus furnished. Actuated by the hope of gain, the officers laid hands on men and women and put them on the ships of the company, without always considering whether they came within the letter of the edict. The fate of these victims of tyranny was bewailed by the public. Honest working-

men, it was said, and innocent girls were arrested; they were treated with every brutality, and at last sent to a land where, if they did not die on the passage, they would soon be scalped by Indians or eaten by alligators. Some of these unwilling colonists made desperate efforts to escape their fate. A party of girls at La Rochelle refused to embark. The guard fired upon them and killed six.[1] So much discontent was excited that the government was obliged to modify the edicts, and such endeavors at colonization were abandoned.

The demoralization induced by the gambling excitement of the last few months, and the suffering which followed in its train, appeared in every class of society. Never had murders and robberies been more frequent. Eleven persons were murdered at Paris within a few days. A man was robbed and cut to pieces on the Pont Neuf. Near the Temple an overturned carriage was found one morning; within was the body of an unknown woman, who had apparently been murdered for the purpose of robbery, and frightfully mangled in mere caprice; the names of neither criminal nor victim could be ascertained. Citizens trembled to find themselves by night in a lonely place. The shopkeeper picked his way through the streets with apprehension, his torchboy going ahead and lighting the way.

Other crimes were forgotten in the excitement at a murder committed by the bearer of one of the most illustrious names in Europe. The Count of Horn belonged to the ancient house of which the Admiral Horn, who suffered with Egmont on the scaffold, was

[1] Accounts of these disorders can be found in *Journal de la Régence*, and St. Simon.

a member. He was allied to the most distinguished families in Germany and France; the Duke of Orleans himself was his kinsman. His career added no lustre to his pedigree, and he had drifted to Paris, whither the most reckless adventurers and profligates of Europe were attracted by the Mississippi speculation.

After two months of dissipation in Paris, Horn found himself without means. With two other officers, — his inferiors in birth, but his equals in profligacy, — he obtained an interview with a dealer in shares, and made a bargain to sell some at a low price. In order to transact the business without disturbance, they agreed to meet the next day at an inn on the corner of the Rue de Venise. There the unfortunate dealer appeared at the appointed hour with 150,000 livres in bills. As he was counting out the money, he was stabbed by Horn, and by him and his associates was murdered on the spot. His cries aroused the attention of a waiter, and the count, with one of his accomplices, was captured. They were sentenced to be executed by being broken on the wheel.

So atrocious a crime could not be palliated, but the great families with which Horn was connected sought to save him from a mode of death so ignominious, that for three generations it would exclude his near kinspeople from many of the noble chapters and orders of Germany. Ordinarily, the regent was inclined to be too indulgent; on this occasion he was inexorable. It is probable that Law impressed upon him the importance of a conspicuous example, which might check these frightful disorders. Such a murder, committed at a public tavern in business hours, in the very midst of the speculation on the street, excited universal ap-

prehension. The holders of shares had long been fearful as to their wealth, and now they began to be afraid of their lives. Orleans told the noble suitors that, as he was himself a kinsman of Horn, he would share the ignominy with them, and that the shame was in the crime and not in the punishment. Justice then, if not always sure, was usually expeditious. Four days after the murder, the Count of Horn was broken on the wheel at the Place de Grève, the Tyburn of Paris.[1]

This crime furnished the pretext for an act which was induced by other motives. While speculation was rampant, while stocks were rising and fortunes were making, the Rue Quincampoix was regarded by the government with favorable eyes. Law had visited it, had scattered gold among the crowd when gold was not yet under the ban. The roar of buyers and sellers had been grateful to the ears of the great projector. It was far different when he was endeavoring to sustain a falling market. The street had then become the centre for disquieting rumors. There designing men attacked the credit of the state, and sought to depress securities for their own selfish gains. It became odious in his eyes. Those who endeavor to bring down prices are as necessary in a business community as vinegar in salad, but they are never popular.

Furthermore, Law declared that a market for the securities of the company was no longer required. The price of shares had been fixed at 9,000 livres. At that figure they would be either bought or sold by the government. The era for fluctuations was past. The time for fixed values had arrived. The manipu-

[1] *Journal de la Regence*, March 21–26, 1720 ; St. Simon, xvii. 42–48 ; *Recueil de Gueulette.*

lations of the street were meaningless, and could be productive only of harm.[1]

The crimes which had lately been committed were alleged as the reason for prohibiting such speculations. On March 22, 1720, the day of the murder committed by Horn, an edict forbade any transactions in shares on the Rue Quincampoix. The brief glory of that famous street passed away forever. The government also prohibited similar transactions in any part of Paris, under a heavy penalty.[2] The police kept a vigilant lookout for merchants and brokers dealing in public securities. A group of men would gather in some place, shares would be offered, bids made, bargains consummated. Suddenly the cry would be heard, "The watch!" Instantly operators, merchants, clerks, would disperse, and seek escape by the alleys and courtyards, like a band of mischievous boys. But though prices were fixed and dealings forbidden, men still continued to buy and sell their own property. After two months of ineffectual endeavors to stop such transactions, operations in shares were again authorized, and the Place Vendôme was assigned as the theatre for them. The speculation which was there carried on never rivaled in excitement and brilliancy the great months of the Rue Quincampoix.

Though the price of shares was going down, and the price of bread was going up, though crimes were frequent and distress was beginning to be felt, the luxury and the license of the regency were never more unchecked. The receipts of the opera had been 60,000 livres in 1719 ; they were over 700,000 in 1720. The festivities of the carnival were more splendid

[1] These arguments are set out in the edict of March 22.

[2] Edict of March 28.

than usual. The regent and the Duke of Bourbon appeared at these amusements accompanied by their mistresses, who were attired with all the magnificence that money could purchase. Law was seen in the *loge* of the regent, and this was viewed by the mob, with whom he was now unpopular, as an instance of his English impudence.[1] A party of young profligates stopped the funeral procession of one of their associates, and horrified the clergy in attendance by insisting that their comrade had died of thirst, and offering wine for the use of the corpse on its journey to another world.[2]

The purchase of shares by the company, resulting from Law's unfortunate attempt to fix their value, kept the printing-presses of the bank in active operation.[3] Such an inflation of the currency had never before been known. The prices of articles that had been high before now became preposterous. The bills that had formerly been distrusted were now regarded as worthless. Another measure, in reality much less injurious than many which had preceded it, destroyed what little confidence the public still had in the royal bank and the Company of the Indies.

On May 21, a royal edict declared that, in order to provide for foreign commerce and to lessen the immoderate price of provisions, it was expedient to reduce the amount of the circulation by lowering the value of money, and that the price which had been fixed for shares should also be diminished in like proportion. For these reasons it was enacted that a

[1] Marais, i. 324. [2] *Journal de la Régence*, March 20, 1720.

[3] Dutot gives the issues of bills authorized between March 26 and May 17, 1720, at 1,496,400,000. Almost three milliards of paper were in circulation.

bank-bill which represented one hundred livres on May 21, should be worth only eighty on the 22d, and should suffer successive reductions until on the 1st of December it would represent but fifty livres. The price of shares of the company was also to be reduced month by month, until on the 1st of December a share of which the value had been fixed at 9,000 livres would be received at 5,000. The bills were reduced one half in value, and the shares four ninths.[1]

This famous edict was in reality a mere juggling with figures, which made no man either richer or poorer. Calling a bill one of a hundred francs, when it would only buy what fifty francs had once purchased, was a matter of words and nothing more. It was the same with the shares. No royal edict could fix their price any more than that of any other commodity. Their value would ultimately be regulated by the dividends which they earned. It was absurd that the government should forever stand ready to take them at a certain figure. If they became worth more, they would all go into the hands of investors. If they became worth less, the government would have to purchase them all: the Company of the Indies would no longer represent the capital of the community, and public credit would be ruined by the issue of undue quantities of bills with which to buy shares at a fictitious price. So far as the edict went, it did not injure the position of holders. The 5,000 livres which they could receive in December would be worth quite as much as the 9,000 which the government had been ready to give them in May. They would buy as many bushels of grain, as many sheep and oxen, as much of the objects of human desire.

[1] Edict of May 21, 1720 ; Dutot, 918.

While all this was so, the effect produced upon the public mind was very different. The man who had a hundred livre note was told that in six months that note would be worth fifty livres. The operator who had lulled himself with the belief that he was worth a million saw his property proclaimed to be only five hundred thousand. The wealth represented by milliards of shares and bills had been, indeed, but a dream, but it was a stern awakening to have a royal edict proclaim the fact that this was worth only half what it professed to be. The inviolability of the bills of the bank, said their holders, had been promised by Law, had been guaranteed by the king. Now they were suddenly told that, on a bill which promised a thousand francs, only five hundred would be paid.

The results of the edict led many to deny that it originated with Law. Certainly he took part in framing it, and was induced to give it his approval, even if he did not first devise it. His most faithful disciple declared that the fatal error was its repeal, and not its adoption.[1] We may safely reject the fiction which makes this edict the cunning device of enemies laboring to overthrow the system. There was no one in the counsels of the regent who sufficiently understood financial principles to be sure as to the result of any of the measures which were adopted. Law himself was harassed and dazed by the confusion in which the finances had become involved, and we look in vain for adhesion to any principle in the measures which he advocated. If he were to be judged solely by this part of his career, he could only be pronounced a shallow charlatan. The difficulties which he encountered were greater than he could overcome, and his

[1] See Dutot, *Réflexions politiques sur les finances*, 1738.

desperate efforts to sustain the declining fortunes of his enterprises are pathetic in their impotency. The ruin of Law's system was due to the absurd prices to which speculation carried the shares of the company, and to his endeavors to maintain fictitious valuations by the purchase of shares at vastly more than had been received for them. The necessary result of this procedure was the bankruptcy of both the company and the bank. The lavishness of the regent, the over-confidence of Law, the greed of courtiers, only hastened the ruin and made it more disastrous. The experiment of an excessive issue of paper money resulted, as it always must result, in brief inflation and long depression. Indeed, the history of this era could be used as an object-lesson to illustrate the results of the favorite schemes of demagogues. Banking and the most important industries were put in the hands of the state; currency was issued under the control of the government, and in amounts to meet the supposed requirements of business; the average circulation in proportion to the population was larger than in any other country; the value of the specie standard was lowered; and as a result of such measures France was involved in the most disastrous panic which she has ever experienced. It is thus that a contemporary sums up the history of the system: "It has enriched a thousand beggars, and beggared a hundred thousand honest men."[1]

The only real effect of the edict of May was to shake confidence, but that was sufficient to hasten a catastrophe which had long been inevitable. An appalling chorus of complaint and recrimination greeted the ill-fated measure. Everybody persisted in thinking

[1] *Journal de Marais*, i. 386.

that he was worth only half as much as he had been before. Alarmed at the state of public feeling, the edict was rescinded six days after it had been promulgated, but the shock which public confidence had received was not affected by the repeal. It was apparent that both the shares and the paper currency of the government were a fictitious wealth, which might be called one sum to-day and another to-morrow. The universal desire was to obtain in its place something, the value of which was based upon a certain footing, and could be changed by no edict of government.

From this time, the slow and painful process of liquidation really began. Law struggled to restore the broken fortunes of the Company of the Indies, but one by one the measures were annulled by which the financial systems of mankind had been temporarily overthrown. Towards the last of May the prohibition of the use of the precious metals as currency was repealed. The experiment of banishing gold and silver from the marts of the world was abandoned before it had been fairly made. As a necessary consequence, the edict which forbade the possession of more than five hundred livres in specie was done away with. Any one might have as much gold and silver as he could lawfully obtain.[1] "Alas," said a contemporary, "the permission comes when nobody has any left."[2]

The depreciation of the currency caused such serious disturbance that, later in the century, this might have ripened into revolution. Butchers, bakers, grocers, the most of the tradespeople, were unwilling to receive paper money at all. Specie had been driven out of circulation. There arose a fierce demand for

[1] *Arrêts*, May 29 and June 1, 1720.
[2] *Journal de Barbier.*

something with which one could buy bread to eat, wood to burn, and clothes to wear. What had been a condition of need bade fair to become a condition of physical distress. It was impossible for the bank to redeem in gold the bills which had been so profusely issued. Its reserve in the precious metals was not two per cent. of the amount of its circulation. The community was no longer content with a sign of transmission which possessed no intrinsic value, and the regent dared not leave the populace of Paris in a condition where bread riots might endanger the government.

Endeavors were made to increase the reserve, and to diminish the desire for specie by a series of conflicting edicts. The value of gold and silver was alternately raised and reduced. From September, 1719, to December, 1720, the value of gold was changed twenty-eight times, and that of silver thirty-five.[1] This surpassed the worst record of the old régime. A louis ranged in value from thirty to seventy-two livres within six months. The weight of gold was the same, but the sum for which the government would issue or receive it fluctuated with startling rapidity. Such measures had no effect. In a condition of panic, the only desire was to lay hold of a piece of gold, whether it was called ten francs or fifty. It would buy something for daily needs, or it could be put aside with the assurance that ultimately it would command its real value. There was a large number of bills of the denomination of ten livres, or about two dollars. These were mostly in the hands of the poorer classes, and an endeavor was made to relieve the necessities of those in greatest need by their redemption. On June 1,

[1] *Recherches historiques sur le système de Law*, 203.

the bank again began specie payments. An attempt was made to redeem bills of one hundred livres, but soon only those of ten livres were paid. Payments were slow, and it was impossible to satisfy the multitude who flocked to the Rue Vivienne in search of specie, with which to defray their daily expenses. The streets in the vicinity of the magnificent buildings of the Company of the Indies were again filled with great throngs, but they bore little resemblance to the crowds of eager and sanguine speculators who had jostled each other in the same streets only nine months before. All had then been desirous to participate in the wealth with which Law was to endow France; they were rich in anticipation, if not in reality. Those who were now found there were actuated, not by the hope of gain, but by the fear of starvation; holding in their hands a solitary ten-franc note, they occupied the long hours of waiting with cursing Law and his schemes.

By two o'clock in the morning people began to gather about the bank, although the office for payment was not open until nine. It usually closed at noon, and many who had waited nine or ten hours during the chill of the night, and under the sun of a July morning, were unable to reach the wicket, and went away with only fatigue for their pains. Strong, burly men worked their way through the crowd, elbowing and trampling upon those who were less robust. Some climbed the trees, and by their aid endeavored to swing themselves over the heads of the throng and reach a place in the court of the bank. Serious injuries were common, and not infrequently persons were suffocated or trampled to death in the press. Several women lost their lives in this way, and the

fate of these unfortunate victims embittered the feelings of the populace. On July 17, fifteen thousand people were in the Rue Vivienne by three in the morning. The crowd was so terrible that when day came sixteen persons were found suffocated. Appalled at such a calamity, the mob abandoned its efforts to reach the bureau, and proceeded to show its resentment. Part of the crowd rushed to the Louvre, and there exposed under the window of Louis XV.'s chamber the body of one of the women who had been killed. A still greater multitude, placing the bodies of four of the victims on stretchers, carried them to the Palais Royal, the residence of the regent. Only leaders were needed to instigate an assault upon the palace, and to anticipate some of the horrors of the Revolution. But the mob was appeased by soft words. Relays of soldiers and police arrived, and the streets were cleared. While many of the malcontents were still assembled, the carriage of Law drove through their midst. His livery was recognized. A woman cried out to him, "If there were four more women like myself, you would be torn to pieces." It seemed probable that such would be his fate, but by his self-possession Law succeeded in keeping the crowd at bay, and made his escape by a back door of the palace. The carriage was overturned, and the coachman had his leg broken.[1] Law remained in concealment at the Palais Royal for ten days. His family, as well as himself, were in danger from the hostility of the mob. His daughter, a child of thirteen, was in her carriage when some ruf-

[1] *Journal de la Régence,* Marais and Barbier for July 17. Buvat, the author of the *Journal de la Régence,* worked near the scene of these assemblages about the bank, and nearly lost his own life in one of them.

fian cried out, "That is the livery of the beggar who does n't pay his bills of ten francs." The carriage was pelted with mud, and the girl received slight injuries. Madame de Torcy was taken for Law's wife by some peasants, and they were about to drown her in a neighboring pond. Only by proving her identity could she escape their violence.[1]

The disorders and loss of life on the Rue Vivienne furnished a pretext for discontinuing the redemption of the bills of ten livres. Specie payments by the bank were entirely suspended. Money was furnished to some of the bakers and vendors of supplies, in order to prevent the danger of actual famine.

During this season of distress, the work of destroying Law's great institution of credit went slowly on. New rentes were offered to the public, in the hope of retiring some of the excessive currency. The government was held in such distrust that the community regarded the rentes as worthless as the bills. Subscriptions for them were slowly received. Less than one third of the 624,000 shares of the Company of the Indies were now in the hands of the public. Those that were held by the king and the company were canceled, and the capital was reduced to 200,000 shares. Their price continued its downward course with increasing rapidity. In July, they sold at 4,200, payable in bills which were themselves at a discount of fifty per cent.

In September, another edict endeavored to fix the value of the discredited shares, and to provide a bureau for their purchase. The fall continued, unaffected by such measures, and by any measures which the government adopted. Law had appreciated the

[1] *Journal de Marais*, i. 338.

necessity of credit for great business enterprises; he was now to experience the helplessness of any efforts when credit is lacking. By October 7, bills were at a discount of almost eighty per cent. An edict issued on October 10, 1720, may be regarded as the formal close of the system. It declared that in their present discredited condition the bankbills which were still outstanding were a hindrance to commerce, and worked evils that only the resumption of specie payments could remove. From the 1st of November, therefore, they could no longer be used as currency; contracts must again be discharged and payments made in gold and silver. The paper currency of the state, after an experience of less than two years, was extinguished. The experiment was abandoned of a circulation that should expand with the needs of trade. After this measure, the stock of the company reached the lowest figure. In November, shares sold for 2,000, payable in paper that was then worth but ten cents on the dollar. In January, 1721, a gold louis purchased a share of stock which had sold a year before for 20,000 livres.[1] It was a fall from 4,000 per cent. to nine per cent. in twelve months.[2] The results of such a depreciation are described by one of the sufferers. "Last January," writes Barbier, "I had 60,000 livres in paper. Its value was imaginary, to be sure, but I had only to realize on it and turn it into money. I did not have the wisdom

[1] *Histoire du Visa*, i. 53. Duhautchamp says that shares sold at thirty livres, or six per cent. The lowest prices were during the proceedings of the Visa, when many wished to get rid of their stock at any price. Those who bought at this time subsequently realized a handsome profit.

[2] The value of the louis was then 45 livres.

or the good luck to do so. Now it is worthless, and, though I have neither speculated nor lost, to-day I have not enough money to give New Year's gifts to my servants."[1] During these lamentable experiences, the French people relieved their feelings by satire, instead of by insurrection. Epigrams of every variety criticised Law, the regent, the Duke of Bourbon, any one whom the public counted among the authors of their misfortunes. Among the burlesque titles of books which were announced as ready for publication we find, "Dissertation on the Philosopher's Stone," by M. Law, dedicated to the regent; "The Art of Converting those who have no Religion," by the Abbé Tencin, dedicated to Law; "A Treatise on Christianity," by the Abbé Dubois, dedicated to the Duke of Orleans.[2] A well-known epitaph declared the merits of the unparalleled calculator who, by the rules of algebra, had brought France to the almshouse.[3] The libels on the regent were more severe than on Law, and he was greatly annoyed by them. Murder and incest were among the offenses constantly laid to his charge, and it is not surprising that he should have shown some sensitiveness.

Law's errors involved in the common ruin the beneficial institutions with which he had sought to endow France. The bank, which under proper regulations had been of great advantage to trade, passed out of existence. Almost a century was to elapse before the

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, January 1, 1721.

[2] *Journal de la Régence*, February, 1720.

[3] Cy gît cet Ecossais celèbre,
Ce calculateur sans égal,
Qui, par les règles de l'algèbre,
A mis la France à l'hôpital.

organization of the Bank of France. The reforms which Law had effected in taxation were abandoned; those which he had contemplated now found no one to advocate them. The great projector remained for several months a spectator of the ruin of the system by which he had hoped to change the face of the world. Among all who suffered from the disasters in which France was involved, we may be sure that Law was himself the most miserable. He was odious to a people whose welfare he had sought; his ambition was crushed, his cherished discoveries had become the laughing-stock of some, and the anathema of others. His life had often been in danger; his family were exposed to the insults of the mob. In May, he had been removed from the office of comptroller general. Orleans, however, remained friendly to the fallen minister. He was not restored to his position as comptroller, but he continued to act as director of the bank and of the company. There he exercised some influence on the measures of the next few months, though his advice was less heeded as it became apparent that no ingenuity could save the system from bankruptcy. His enemies were numerous, and they were eager for his prosecution. Two years before, the populace had been excited by the report that the officers of the Parliament were to arrest Law, try him, and hang him within three hours.[1] Such summary punishment did not now seem unlikely. But the regent was loath to take severe measures against one who had committed no crime for which he should be sacrificed to public clamor. It must be said to the credit of the Duke of Bourbon that, unlike many others, he did not desert the man by whom he had been enriched. On

[1] St. Simon, xv. 354; Barbier, September, 1718.

December 21, 1720, Law received his passport; he left his country seat and went directly to Brussels. He was arrested on the way by an over-zealous official, but orders were sent from Paris which set him at liberty. At Brussels he was received with distinction, but his public career was ended. It was said that he was invited by the Czar to visit Russia, and reorganize the finances of that country. There was probably little foundation for such a report. At all events, he did not respond to the invitation. He traveled from one city to another, went again to England, and at last took up his residence in Venice. Those who complained because Law was not brought to justice declared that he had carried away with him enormous wealth. This was entirely false. He took with him almost nothing. The Duke of Bourbon offered him some money when he was about to leave, but Law declined, and with characteristic generosity gave a valuable ring to Mme. de Prie, who had assisted him in his escape.

Indeed, in all that he did, it is impossible to deny Law the praise of being actuated by a sincere desire to augment the public happiness. He said that an ambition to increase the welfare of France, more than any personal interest, engaged him in his undertaking, and this was true.[1] "In my labors," he wrote the regent, "I wished to be useful to a great people. I desired neither wealth nor office, except as they aided me to succeed in my purpose." [2] By the rise in price

[1] Lettre I., *Sur les Banques*. See, also, Barbier, i. 287, and letters of Law from Venice.

[2] Law to Regent, March 1, 1721. "En travaillant, j'avais en vue d'être utile à un grand peuple ; je ne désirais les biens ni les charges qu'autant quelles pourraient m'aider à réussir dans mon dessein."

of the shares of the company he himself profited, but his gains were small when compared with those of many fortunate speculators, or of many nobles who used the opportunities which their rank and influence procured for them. Law's confidence in the solidity of his enterprises was shown by the investment he made of his profits. He bought largely of land in France. When so many rushed to the bank, to drain it of gold in exchange for their bills, when it was charged that the Prince of Conti insisted on converting the enormous quantity of bills and shares which he held into specie, and took away three carts full, Law took nothing for himself.[1] He sent away no money for his own use, he made no investments in other countries; he came to France a rich man and he left it a beggar. He stood by his own institutions, and was involved in their overthrow. There is a dignity in his character and in his ruin. Amid the sordid and vulgar passions which were excited by the Mississippi scheme, its unfortunate inventor showed a public spirit and a disinterestedness that were exhibited by few others.

His property was all in France, and it was seized by the government. Of this he complained, and justly. His administration, both of the bank and of the company, had been an honest one. He was not liable for their debts. He made no unreasonable request when he asked to be allowed as much as he had brought to France; that, he said, would enable him to live with comfort. "For the company," he wrote, "I have sacrificed everything, my property, my credit, and the welfare of my children. . . . I have served it with a

[1] S. Simon, xvi. 436. St. Simon's accusations of his enemies must be received with caution, but no one could exaggerate the greed and the despicable character of the Prince of Conti.

disinterestedness which is shown by few."[1] He received nothing.

So long as the Duke of Orleans lived, Law entertained the hope that he might return to France, and again be employed in the service of the state. Taught by past experience, he might well have been a useful minister, and Orleans was not unwilling to recall him.[2] But the name of Law was so hateful to the community that he hesitated to make the experiment. A modest pension was, however, paid to the fallen financier during the regent's lifetime.

With the death of Orleans, Law's hope of a return to favor vanished. He no longer received his pension; his repeated requests that something should be allowed him from his estates were disregarded. He was again compelled to earn his livelihood at the card table, but the fortune of his earlier years had deserted him. In 1729, Law died at Venice, poor and broken-hearted. Montesquieu visited him the year before his death. "He was still the same man," he writes, "with small means, but playing high and boldly, his mind occupied with projects, his head filled with calculations."

The task remained of liquidating the indebtedness of the system. The bills of the bank were guaranteed by the king; the Company of the Indies had been so under the control of the government that it could not be turned adrift as merely a private corporation. The

[1] Letter to the Duke of Bourbon, August, 1724.

[2] See Law's letter to Bourbon, and *Mémoires justificatifs*. The Venetian minister wrote in September, 1723, that Law's return was regarded as very probable, but by the people it would be even more abhorred than new taxes. — MS. Bib. Nat., filza 212, 165. The price of shares of the Company of the Indies advanced rapidly when it was said that Law was to return to France, and fell again when this was contradicted. — *Ib.* 195.

measures adopted were severe and unjust. Fortunes had been made by speculation, but this was no crime. The profits of operations allowed by law should not have been dealt with more rigorously than the gains which the prodigality of the regent had allowed to persons of rank and influence. Such, however, was the view adopted.

All persons holding any shares or bills were required to deposit them, with a statement of the manner in which they were acquired. Many had invested their profits in land and other property, and the notaries of France were ordered to furnish the record of all transactions during the last two years. The task was a Herculean one; it was performed with energy, if not always with justice. "Those who have lost are already ruined," the people complained, "and now they wish to ruin those who gained."[1] Eight hundred employees labored for months in preparing the lists; the rooms once occupied by the bank were now filled with clerks making up the final accounts of the great speculation. Five hundred and eleven thousand persons deposited bills and shares, from millions in nominal value down to a single share or a ten-franc note. In all, bills and contracts to the amount of over 2,200,000,000 livres were deposited, and 125,000 shares of the Company of the Indies. All that were not presented within the prescribed term were declared to be null and void.

These amounts were then reduced in various proportions. Those whose possessions were thought to be most meritorious suffered least. The former owners of rentes were protected; fortunate speculators were severely mulcted. The amount of bills outstanding

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, i. 202.

was thus reduced to 1,700,000,000, and for this sum the holders received either rentes at two and one half per cent. or annuities at four per cent. Securities at so low a rate of interest were little desired, but there was no alternative. The interest on the government debt was less than it had been before the operations of Law, but this result was obtained by a partial repudiation of the liabilities of the state. When the accounts were finished, the mass of papers, bills, shares, and all the records of the investigation were put in a great iron chest and burned. Days were occupied in the consumption of the enormous débris that remained. Fire purifies everything, it was said, and the system of Law passed away in smoke.[1]

The Mississippi millionaires were not allowed to escape with the partial confiscation of such property as they had presented before the Visa. Estimates were made of their wealth, and enormous fines were levied upon them. The widow Chaumont led the list with a penalty of 8,000,000. The total amount of these fines was 187,000,000. Nothing in principle distinguished them from the forced loans levied on Jews in the Middle Ages, or on wealthy citizens in the dominions of the Sultan of Turkey. This wealth had not been gained by any corrupt dealings with the state. The crime consisted in the fact that a great deal of money had been made by people of small account. The government declared that those must be punished who, two years before, had been poor, and now possessed riches above their condition.[2] The profits made from the system by the nobility were as large as those of the speculators, but the name of no person of rank

[1] *Journal de Marais*, ii. 363.

[2] *Arrêt* of July 29, 1721.

appears among those who were fined for their good fortune. The exemption of nobles from taxation was extended to their gains from Law's system.

Some of the assessments were paid; some of those liable had fled with their property to other countries; some escaped through the influence of friends and patrons. The Duke of Bourbon declared that the proceedings would be a farce unless Orleans agreed to turn a deaf ear to applications for grace. The regent bound himself to grant no favor, but the promise was not fully kept. From the beginning, the Parisians had prophesied that the proceedings against the speculators would be quite as profitable to the regent's mistresses as to the state.[1]

It still remained to settle the fate of the Company of the Indies, the institution on which Law had based his fondest hopes. The 125,000 shares were reduced to 56,000 by the same process adopted in reference to the bills of the bank. The privilege of coinage and the farm of the taxes were taken from the company. The monopoly of tobacco was not disturbed, but with that exception it remained simply a trading corporation. As such it carried on business for many years, and at times with a certain degree of prosperity. Its shares once sold as high as 3,000 livres. For a long period the profits were sufficient to pay moderate dividends. The decline of the colonial empire of France during the reign of Louis XV. involved the company in the common ruin; in 1769, it ceased to exist. The inertness of the king, the follies of Mme. de Pompadour, and the inefficiency of the ministers destroyed the institution by which Law had hoped to make France the greatest colonial power of Europe, to build up a

[1] See Marais, September, 1722, and Buvat.

commerce which should exceed that of England and Holland.[1]

The immediate results of Law's system were disastrous, and the errors which produced its overthrow can be easily seen. Still, its originator might justly claim that he had done much for the development of his adopted country. The principle of credit, the courage for large enterprises, remained as his work. Fortunes were lost and honest men beggared, but a new impetus was given to commerce.[2] In considering the industrial development of France in the eighteenth century, some credit should be given to the influence of the teachings of Law. The evils produced by an inflated and insecure currency showed dangers to be avoided; but wherein he had anticipated the larger activity of modern times, he helped to rouse France from the antiquated methods of the past. He advocated better roads, greater freedom from commercial restraints, and improved systems of taxation. In all these respects, vast changes were effected before the close of the century.

The system produced social as well as economical results. Royalty lost something of its sanctity from its connection with banks and trading companies. Such a relation was inconsistent with the majesty of

[1] The details of the Visa can be found in *Histoire du Visa*, by Duhautchamp, in four volumes; *Registres du conseil d'état;* in *Mémoires de St. Simon;* and in the journals of Barbier, Marais, and Buvat.

[2] The commercial marine of France, in 1738, was stated to be six times larger than in 1716. Even if this was an overestimate, it was certainly three or four times larger. In December, 1721, Barbier says that, although many had been ruined by the system, yet the country had never been so rich and flourishing as it then was. — *Journal*, i. 397.

the throne as it had been personified by Louis XIV. Moreover, the king was not an honest banker. The bills of the royal bank were reduced and repudiated. Such things impair the divinity that doth hedge a king.

Nor did the nobility fare better. Their greed to share in the profits of Law's enterprises was unconcealed. The enormous profits of Bourbon, Conti, Antin, and others of the highest rank were notorious. A feudal nobleman, living on his ancient estates, ruling his tenantry, despising trade and the vulgar interests of plebeians, might command respect, but a duke dabbling in shares on the Rue Quincampoix put himself on the same level with the widow Chaumont, or André the Mississippian. The Duke of La Force was tried before Parliament on the charge that he had invested his gains, under fictitious names, in an unlawful monopoly of groceries. He was solemnly censured for having forgotten the example of his ancestors, and dealt in soap and tallow in a manner unbefitting the dignity of a peer of France.[1] "Never has the nobility of France seemed less heroic than now," wrote a contemporary.

On the other hand, the fortunes realized from the system showed the opportunities which an enlarged commerce could furnish for all. The Revolution was said to have opened the field for talent. When every private felt that he might carry a marshal's baton in his knapsack, the army produced hundreds of generals who helped to win for France the battles of the

[1] The details of this trial, which created an enormous excitement, can be found in the journals of Barbier, Marais, and Buvat, as well as in the *Registres du Parlement;* also in *Mém. de Villars.*

Revolution and of the Napoleonic wars. When there is an opening for talent in business, as well as in war, results are accomplished that before seemed impossible. The system of Law did not leave France as she had been. Notwithstanding all the harm it did, and all the misery it caused, it must be reckoned among the influences which made France at the close of the eighteenth century so far removed from France at its beginning.[1]

[1] The authorities on the system of Law and his financial career are numerous. The *Registres du Parlement* and *Registres du Conseil de l'Etat* contain much of the official history, including the interminable disputes with the Parliament. For Law's theories the best authority, naturally, is to be found in his writings. His views, as there expressed, cannot always be reconciled with each other, but the course of events either changed many of his beliefs, or compelled him to advocate what he did not believe. The book of his employee and disciple, Dutot, is valuable, and is trustworthy as to Law's views and the history of the system, however erroneous its political economy may be. The history of the speculation, and of the various incidents connected with Law's career in Paris, can be found in the journals of Barbier and Marais, the MS. *Journal de la Régence*, the memoirs of St. Simon and Villars, the MS. letters of Noailles, and in the correspondence of the Venetian and English ambassadors at Paris. Many interesting relations and pamphlets throw light upon the condition of Louisiana. Some of them are accounts by travelers and officers which are entitled to credit; the reports which are not true, but which found credence at Paris, are equally curious. There are in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* a great number of contemporary pamphlets and documents of every kind in reference to this period. The *Histoire du Système* and *Histoire du Visa* contain most of the edicts and *arrêts* in reference to the bank and the company. The portion of Forbonnais's *Recherches sur les Finances* which treats of Law is as valuable as the rest of the work. The number of books written about Law and his system is large. By far the most valuable is by Levasseur, *Recherches historiques sur le système de Law.*

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MINISTRY OF DUBOIS.

1717–1721.

In the excitement of the Mississippi speculation, political changes attracted less attention. People were too busy operating in shares to be disturbed by the intrigues of Dubois, or by wrangles over Jansenism. The foreign policy of the regent had secured tranquillity for France and for Europe; neither wars nor rumors of wars disquieted the community. The internal administration of the regency, however, was altered in some important respects. Where modifications had been attempted on the former system, these were to a large extent abandoned; the internal policy of the close of this era did not differ largely from that in force when Louis XIV. died.

The successful formation of the Triple Alliance made Dubois the most prominent man among the regent's advisers, and with unremitting industry he strengthened the influence which he had thus gained. In less than five years after he had started for the Hague, an obscure abbé disguised as an itinerant book-buyer, he was made an archbishop, a cardinal, and prime minister of France. His advice was constantly more heeded by the regent, whose weariness of the affairs of state increased as he sank deeper in a career of sensuality. For the judicious measures of this period

Dubois is entitled to most of the credit, and for the unwise measures he deserves most of the blame.

The experiment of the councils organized by the regent had been tried for three years, and had proved a failure. They had shown neither energy nor judgment in the administration of the affairs committed to their charge; they had been equally ineffective in restoring to the aristocracy the influence in the state which they desired. Such a change could not be accomplished by making places for men of rank to fill, but by making men of rank fit to fill the places. The attempted reform began at the wrong end. In 1717, Dubois entered the council for foreign affairs. "He wished to work his way into it," says the historian of the aristocracy, "like the plants which grow into walls and at last overthrow them."[1] The comparison was a just one. Dubois was a vigorous plant, penetrating the crevices of a very dilapidated wall. In 1718, all the councils save that of the regency were abolished. They had so lost their influence that their overthrow attracted no attention. Their functions again devolved upon secretaries of state, as in the time of Louis XIV., and Dubois, the secretary for foreign affairs, controlled the relations of France with the other powers of Europe.

The tendencies of an absolute monarchy soon brought the government in conflict with a body whose ambition Orleans had flattered before his own power had been established. At the session of the Parliament in which the provisions of Louis XIV.'s will were set aside, Orleans had declared that he would restore to that body its ancient privilege of remonstrance before the registration of an edict. This was

[1] St. Simon, xiii. 277.

alike an important and an unimportant right. It was admitted that the sovereign, in the exercise of his prerogative, could summon the Parliament into his presence, and, in a bed of justice, compel the immediate registration of his decrees. On the other hand, remonstrances addressed by an ancient and august body of magistrates would often have a great influence on the community, and they might operate as a restraint on the sovereign. The king of France was an absolute monarch, but he was not a Turkish Sultan; he could not disregard, with wanton indifference, the sentiments of the people he governed. When distress prevailed, when wars were unsuccessful, when the person of the king excited no respect, the influence of the Parliament, as the recognized institution for the expression of popular discontent, necessarily increased. It had been a great power in the state when Louis XIV. was an infant and Mazarin was unpopular; it possessed no power in the state when Louis XIV. had grown to be a man, when he was both beloved and feared. That monarch had so curtailed the right of remonstrance that it was practically abrogated. He did this, not from any fear of the check which the Parliament could exercise upon his authority, but because it shocked his instincts that the policy of a king should be criticised by a body of lawyers.

Orleans had won the hearts of the magistrates when he assured them that he desired the counsels of their wisdom to guide his steps as a ruler, but this auspicious harmony was of short duration. The liberal tendencies of the regent were considerably modified when the control of the state was in his own hands. His advisers were imbued with the theories of the uncontrolled power of the sovereign which prevailed

in France. Dubois was a sagacious man, but he accepted the political beliefs of his era, and he was not a believer in the utility of popular government. He warned the regent against associating his subjects in the government of the state, against establishing in France the systems of England. "Let your wisdom avert from France the dangerous project of making of the French a free people," he wrote Orleans, when dissuading him from summoning the States General. To allow political influence to a body of lawyers was as distasteful as to ask the counsel of the representatives of the people, and there was less to be said in its favor.

When the Parliament was seeking opportunities to increase its influence, and the government was jealous of any interference with its projects, a collision could not long be averted. The crisis was reached when the development of Law's schemes began to absorb the attention of the community. The French Parliament was sure to oppose the enterprises of Law, because all new measures were distasteful to it. The conservatism often found among lawyers was exaggerated in these courts; the hostility to innovations, which was strong among the French people, was strongest among jurists who cherished hereditary traditions, who enjoyed assured positions, and who desired the world to remain as it was. Those who oppose all changes are often right, but it is not thus that governments can be carried on or civilization progress.

In August, 1717, edicts were presented for registration, organizing the Company of the West, and regulating various financial measures. In order to form a more correct judgment of their utility, the Parliament demanded of the regent a statement of the financial affairs of the kingdom. Nothing would have been

regarded as more revolutionary. Mystery enveloped the treasury; to render an account of its condition was contrary to every maxim of statecraft, and was degrading to the authority of the sovereign. The demand met with a chilling refusal. The judges were stimulated, rather than discouraged by this rebuff. An edict altering the value of the coin was not sent to them for registration, upon the claim that purely financial measures were without their jurisdiction. Thereupon the courts forbade notaries to allow the new coin to be received in payment of obligations. This was plainly a legislative act, and the Parliament of Paris had no more authority to enforce it than the College of the Sorbonne. Their mandate to the notaries was annulled by the council of state as contrary to the authority of the king; soldiers seized the printing-presses, and destroyed the copies of so revolutionary a resolution.

The conflict over the financial measures of the government continued. On the 12th of August, the Parliament adopted a resolution which forbade the deposit of the moneys of the state with Law's bank, and threatened the penalties of the law upon any foreigner who took part in the administration of the royal finances. This was again an attempt to exercise legislative functions, but, like so many similar attempts, it resulted in nothing. The courts were forthwith summoned to a bed of justice held at the Tuileries in the presence of the infant king. Thither the judges marched, trailing their majestic robes. The guard of the seals read an edict curtailing the privileges of the Parliament; the courts were forbidden to interfere in any questions of finance; after a delay of eight days an edict would be regarded as registered, no matter

what opposition the judges might make. This decree was forthwith registered in silence. No voice of remonstrance could be raised in a bed of justice; whether it was held by Louis XIV. at the summit of his power, or by Louis XV. in his nurse's arms, all resistance to the monarch's will ceased in the monarch's presence.

The prerogatives claimed by the aristocracy of the robe excited the jealousy of the aristocracy of the sword. St. Simon has told us of the delight with which he watched this bed of justice, where "those fierce legists, those proud bourgeois," had to kneel at the foot of the throne and receive the commands of their sovereign, while the peers of France, seated by the side of the monarch, watched the humiliation of their rivals.

This act of vigor on the part of the regent was followed by the arrest of a number of those who had been most insubordinate. The cause of the Parliament was popular in Paris, but there was no danger of resistance to the government. "Every one says that he wants to act in behalf of the courts," writes an advocate, "but no one dares to begin."[1] Nothing was more useless than this formality of registration, says the same writer: the Parliament was a respectable body, but incapable of taking any part in the affairs of the state; the older members were learned in the law, but wedded to the modes of thought of their youth; they had not followed the changes of government, or the fluctuations of politics; many of the members were young, rich, and ignorant, and were incapable of either forming or expressing an opinion.[2] The judges now abandoned attempts at legislation, and occupied themselves with soliciting the return of their comrades; months passed away before even that was accorded.

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, 1718. [2] *Ib.*, September, 1720.

After this defeat, the courts watched with tranquillity the progress of Law's system. In 1720, when the system began to totter, and popular discontent was excited by the reverses of the Mississippi, the Parliament again roused to activity, and refused its approval to edicts which were presented. It was treated with little consideration. The entire body was forthwith exiled to Pontoise, and there the members remained for six months. The hall of their deliberations at Paris was put in charge of soldiers, who amused themselves with the solemn trial of a cat; after eloquent pleading, the animal was condemned to death for high crimes against the state. The judges did not conduct themselves with much more dignity during their exile at Pontoise. It was a season of riotous living; magnificent dinners were given, play was high, the consumption of wine was liberal. Perhaps with the object of making the condition of the exiles appear less heroic, the regent furnished the first president with large amounts of money, which he spent in prodigal entertainments. In December, a reconciliation was effected. Law's overthrow had been accomplished; an agreement was reached, by which the Parliament consented to register the bull Unigenitus, and the judges returned to their duties at Paris. But such contests were perennial. The laws of France derived their validity from the will of the sovereign alone: registration with the courts in no way added to their force; it was merely the promulgation of the royal decree. Yet a body which was representative in its nature, and which possessed any measure of legislative authority, might have developed a right from what had originally been a form. But there could be no development of legislative authority in a

court whose members obtained their places by paying for them. The body was not adapted for such functions; the members represented only themselves. The king and the Parliaments disputed for centuries over the question of registration; the courts were no further advanced under Louis XVI. than they had been under the Valois kings. The efforts to make legislators of the judges were as unprofitable to France as the efforts to make administrators of the nobility. The judicial record of the French Parliaments was creditable, but politically they were failures. Kings and courts continued to wrangle until the Revolution swept away both monarchy and Parliament.[1]

The political relations of Europe were changing by the growth of new powers, as well as by the decline of those which had once been great. In the eighteenth century Russia and Prussia began to exert an influence in Europe, which has since continued to increase. Russian ambassadors of very questionable character had presented themselves at the court of Louis XIV. in 1685, but the nation from which they came was then regarded as hardly more a part of the system of Europe than was the kingdom of Siam. The representatives of either power were viewed with the same curiosity, and the same unconcern. Since then the genius of Peter the Great had attracted the attention of the world to Russia, and he desired to emphasize the changed position of the empire which he ruled by forming alliances with the Western states.

[1] The authorities for the contest between the regent and the Parliament of Paris are found in *Régistres du conseil secret; Journal de Barbier, de Marais, de la Régence; Mémoires de St. Simon; Recherches historiques sur le Système de Law*, by Levasseur.

In 1716, he visited Holland, and the possibility of a combination between the Czar and the regent so alarmed George I. that he hastened to ally himself with France. In May, 1717, the Czar came to Paris, and there remained six weeks. The appearance of the Russian despot excited the same curiosity among the French that the products of a luxurious civilization aroused in him. No one could fail to discover the signs of a powerful intellect in the strongly marked features of Peter the Great; as little could one fail to recognize the barbarian in his dress and his manners. The lack of powder on his hair and of gloves upon his hands might be excused, but neither gold buttons nor diamonds atoned for soiled clothes and an aversion to baths. The enormous amounts which he ate and drank excited the wonder of his entertainers. Unfortunately his capacity did not equal his appetite, and the great monarch was often very vilely drunk. His attendants rivaled him in his orgies. Sixteen pints of wine his almoner consumed each day, and this allowance he doubled on great occasions.[1] St. Simon tells of the horror with which the governor of Versailles saw the crapulous court of Peter there established, and desecrating with drinking bouts and prostitutes the apartments dedicated to virtue by Mme. de Maintenon.[2] Peter excited equal consternation, with less cause, by his disregard of the decorum which surrounded monarchs. The spectacle of the Czar of Russia driving through the streets of Paris in a public fiacre seemed revolutionary to a people accustomed to the stately etiquette of Louis XIV. In another respect his conduct was deemed unworthy of royalty;

[1] Louville to St. Aignan, June 17, 1717.

[2] St. Simon, xiv. 29.

he displayed no princely prodigality in his expenditure of money. The workmen at the Gobelins complained that he examined the products of their skill, and left them only a crown to drink his health; the employees at the royal library showed its treasures to the visitor, but they received no *pourboires;* the merchants said that the Czar cheapened their wares, and got better bargains than the wife of a bourgeois.[1] Parsimony is not, however, a serious vice in one whose liberalities have to be paid for by his subjects.

The Czar had not come to Paris simply to gratify his curiosity, or to indulge in debauchery. He wished to make a treaty of alliance with France, and to obtain the subsidies which that country had long paid to Sweden. Sweden, he said, was decaying in power, Russia was increasing; an alliance with Sweden might have been judicious in 1648, but it did not follow that it was good policy in 1717: then that country was powerful, as a result of the genius of Gustavus Adolphus; now it was weak, as a result of the folly of Charles XII.; it was the true policy of France to ally herself in the north with the power which was destined there to exert the greatest influence.[2] These views were entitled to consideration, but Dubois was firmly bound to the English alliance, and England already looked with suspicion upon the increasing strength of Russia. Peter was unable to realize his desires.[3]

[1] For these complaints, see MS. *Journal de la Régence*, ii. 736, 745, etc. The writer speaks feelingly, for he hoped for a douceur, but did not receive it.

[2] See *Mémoire de Tessé à Huxelles*, May 19, 1717.

[3] *Instructions pour M. le Maréchal de Tessé.* How unknown Russia then was to the rest of Europe appears from this paper. The minister says that he cannot speak intelligently in reference to a treaty of commerce, because he does not know what French

A treaty of small importance was subsequently signed between France and Russia and Prussia. Formal diplomatic relations with Russia were commenced, and she was thus received into the community of civilized nations. Though Peter did not accomplish all that he desired, he was pleased with what France had to show, and with the reception which he received. He prophesied, however, the speedy decadence of a people so given to immoderate luxury. The prophecy has not been fulfilled, but such a result might well seem probable to one who contrasted the condition of his own capital on the banks of the Neva with that of the luxurious and pleasure-loving capital on the banks of the Seine.[1]

The Sultan of Turkey followed the example of his northern neighbor in an endeavor to establish more intimate relations with France. In 1720, an ambassador from the Porte was sent to the court of Louis XV. It was an innovation in the diplomacy of Constantinople, for the dignity of the Sultan was thought to be preserved by refusing to send representatives to the infidels of the West. But Mehemet Effendi now came to present the compliments of his master to the king of the Franks. He has related the history of his voyage, and described the impression produced upon him by the sights of Western civilization.[2] If all that he saw excited his wonder, he was a subject

vessels could bring from Russia, and is entirely ignorant of the customs duties, or the regulations as to foreign ships which exist in that country.

[1] Accounts of the voyage of Peter the Great in France can be found in the journals and memoirs of St. Simon, Dangeau, Tessé, *De la Régence*, etc.

[2] *Relation de l'Ambassade de Mehemet Effendi*, published in Turkish and translated into French.

of equal curiosity to those whom he visited. The accounts of his reception sound like the tales of travelers, who now traverse the remote portions of Central Africa where a white man has never been seen. As he ascended the canal to Toulouse, such crowds pressed around the banks to look at him that several were forced into the water and drowned. At every town where he stopped he was equally thronged. Women were suffocated in the press, but such dangers did not check them. By three and four o'clock in the morning the courts of the hotels were filled with people, who waited in the rain and cold for his appearance. "I was amazed at so great curiosity," remarks the placid Oriental.[1] He was no less a marvel at Paris than in the provinces. Neither a Turk nor a Turkish dress had been seen there. His house was filled with crowds anxious to see all that he did, and especially anxious to see him eat; they stood around the table and watched each morsel he took. "These new customs were irksome to me," he writes, but he was informed that the king himself was in like manner watched when he ate, and even when he dressed.[2] Therefore, in conformity with his custom under all troubles, he kissed the hem of the robe of patience.

His journey was attended with many trials. He came from Toulon to Paris in the winter, and most of the roads over which he traveled were probably little better than those to be found in Turkey. He was obliged to leave much of his luggage; the loaded wagons broke down, and he and his servants suffered every discomfort. When he was presented to the regent, he told him that the joy of beholding his visage made him forget the pains of his journey. "But

[1] *Relation*, 62. [2] *Ib.*, 81, 105.

this," he adds conscientiously, "was only for politeness. Not the expanse of the nine heavens would suffice to contain the record of all I suffered from Toulon to Paris." [1]

Still he found consolation when he had reached his journey's end. Paris seemed to him, as to many strangers in all ages, the most charming residence in the whole world. Only Constantinople could equal it. He drove along the Cours la Reine; saw rows of beautiful trees, and carriages filled with ladies whose faces were those of angels, and whose cheeks were of silver, "in the view of whom I found a pleasure that cannot be expressed." "It is a promenade," he declares, "that chases away melancholy and augments joy." [2] "I remembered," he adds, when describing the beauties of Paris and Versailles, "the verse of the Koran which says that this world is a prison for the faithful, but paradise for the infidels."

The political results of this embassy were not very important. Mehemet made his solemn entry into the city. The streets were filled with admiring throngs. "By God's succor," he writes, "all admit that never was seen in Paris an entry so magnificent as mine." [3] He was shown the young king, whose beauty he greatly admired. "His hair was like threads of gold," he says, "his walk as majestic as that of the partridge." [4] He presented the "magnificent and important letter" of his master, the Sultan Ahmed, to the Grand Vizier Dubois, but he made little progress with his negotiations. He visited Dubois, but the cardinal did not return the visit, alleging the custom of the grand vizier of the Sultan. "Our grand vizier does not

[1] *Relation*, 95.
[2] *Ib.*, 107.
[3] *Ib.*, 79.
[4] *Ib.*, 118.

return the visit of ambassadors," says the indignant Mehemet, "but he invites them to great feasts; he bestows on them a cloak of sable, and a magnificent horse richly caparisoned. If the cardinal wishes to follow the example of our grand vizier, let him do it in all things; but I have not even tasted a morsel of his bread." [1] The dispute was arranged, but it was not the only occasion when Dubois's excessive desire to maintain his dignity proved injurious to the interests which he represented. France had long possessed a considerable influence in the East, and controlled a large part of the trade with the Levant. These advantages might have been fostered and increased during the enlightened administration of the grand vizier Ibrahim, but they received little attention.

Dubois's ambition for ecclesiastical promotion now engaged his energies, and interfered with the wise policy of toleration to which the regent was inclined. "If the Abbé Dubois is thinking of being a cardinal," wrote Alberoni in 1718, "he will do nothing that is not directed to that end." [2] His own experience showed how a prime minister who wished to become a cardinal shaped the policy of the country to gratify that ambition. The long delays which both these ministers experienced in the pursuit of a cardinal's hat were not due to aversion to their manners or their morals. The dignity had been bestowed on many worse men than either Dubois or Alberoni, on men who cared less for religion, and who had less ground on which to claim the promotion. But when the lust for the cardinalate possessed one who con-

[1] *Relation*, 180–184.

[2] Alberoni to Cellamare, October 10, 1718.

trolled the policy of the state, it was a mine which could be worked indefinitely. Cardinals were often disobedient and ungrateful to the Holy See, but an applicant for the honor could be relied on to pursue a policy which would be acceptable at Rome. He was sure to remain ultramontane until he had received his promotion. The careers of Richelieu, Mazarin, and Alberoni showed how little control the Roman curia could exercise over some who had actually been clothed with the purple.

The Duke of Orleans began his administration with marks of favor for those who belonged to the Jansenist faction in the church. This was highly distasteful to Clement XI. He had himself issued the bull Unigenitus, by which one hundred and one propositions contained in the Moral Reflections of the Jansenist Quesnel were declared heretical. So great a number were chosen for condemnation, as was alleged, because Le Tellier had told Louis XIV. that he could find a hundred heresies in Quesnel's book, and he insisted that the Pope's judgment should ratify all that he had asserted. Certainly the bull was extorted by Jesuit influence, and its acceptance in France was urged by Jesuit intrigues.

Orleans had no fondness for the Jesuits, and he naturally allied himself with their opponents. Jansenists were released from confinement; they obtained promotion in the church; efforts to compel an acceptance of the doctrines of the Unigenitus were no longer seconded by the influence of the state. Enraged at such measures, the Pope declined to furnish bulls for those whom the regent nominated as bishops; three archbishoprics and twelve bishoprics were thus left without shepherds for the flocks. Orleans was in no

humor to allow this infraction on the principles of the Concordat. A commission was appointed to examine the ancient precedents of the church, and to devise means for the consecration of his nominees without waiting for the papal authority. The members of the commission were men of the strongest Gallican tendencies; they took counsel with clergy equally known for their learning and for their opposition to the encroachments of the papacy. The bare announcement of the appointment of such a commission produced consternation at Rome. Louis XIV. had been vigorous in asserting his own authority, but there was no danger that his disputes with the Holy Father would lead him to forsake the true faith. It was different with the regent: he had no religious belief; his advisers were of the extremest sect of Gallicans. A messenger started from Rome in hot haste, bringing the bulls for all the vacant bishoprics; the prudence of the papacy avoided the continuance of a dangerous quarrel.[1]

The temporary ascendency of Jansenist counsellors was not attended by any important results. The followers of Jansen were quite as narrow in their theology as their opponents; they opposed any measures of toleration for the Protestants as bitterly as Le Tellier or La Chaise. The superiority of the Jansenists over their Jesuit antagonists was largely due to the fact that they were in the minority; their virtues were such as are developed in those who suffer persecution; had they become the predominant faction, there was nothing in their beliefs to prevent the development of the vices found in those who inflict persecution. Time-

[1] St. Simon, xiv. 393–396. St. Simon was the head of the commission.

servers were not found in their ranks, because a profession of the tenets of Jansen was not the road to favor; their followers possessed the hardy virtues which blossom in the shadow of adversity; it is much to be feared that these would have withered away in the sunlight of prosperity.

The favor of the Jansenists was brief, and the influence of the government was soon again exercised in behalf of their opponents. This change in the policy of the regent was due to the influence of Dubois. The abbé was as free from strong convictions on questions of Molinism, or saving grace, as was his master, but he wished to be appointed a cardinal by Clement XI. Nothing was so offensive to the Pope as the scandalous resistance made in France to accepting his definition of the faith; nothing would seem to him more meritorious than to restore religious unity in that country, and to induce a docile adherence to the dogmas of the Unigenitus.

Several of the French prelates had appealed to a future council from the doctrines laid down by Clement XI.; the Sorbonne and the Archbishop of Paris followed their example. Such a step was equivalent to declaring that the Pope had erred on questions of dogma, and the appeals were quashed as illegal and scandalous. The warfare grew more acrimonious. In October, 1717, an edict of the regent forbade further publications on the subject of the Unigenitus. This mandate was unheeded. In 1719, another effort was made, and absolute silence on the subject of the bull was ordered during the period of one year. The regent sadly misjudged the character of enraged theologians if he thought that any truce of God would be observed by them. The contest went on with unabated fury.

Severer and more effective measures were taken against the Jansenists. Ecclesiastical preferments were bestowed only on those who accepted the bull. The bishops and the inferior clergy exercised a tyrannical authority in aid of the cause. Persons who refused to adhere to the Constitution were left to die unabsolved; bishops refused to admit to holy orders those educated at schools where its doctrines were not accepted; the Bishop of Grasse led a mob which broke the windows of a building occupied by the fathers of the Oratory, because they denied its validity; the Archbishop of Arles in his pastoral said that the plague of locusts, with which his diocese was afflicted, was plainly due to the impious resistance of those who refused to accept the bull.[1] Excommunications were frequent, and violences were often excited by the pious zeal of the combatants.

Dubois labored to effect some arrangement with the Archbishop of Paris, the leader of the party opposed to the Constitution, and the archbishop was at last induced to sign an acceptance of the bull accompanied with an explanation of some of its expressions. This the Parliament agreed to register, in order to be released from its exile at Pontoise; the contending parties were ordered in future to live together in harmony, to abandon all appeals from the bull, and to cease calling each other heretics, schismatics, Jansenists, and other opprobrious terms.[2] This nominal reconciliation was as hollow as most reconciliations; the

[1] MS. *Journal de la Régence*, i. 325; ii. 389; iv. 1902; Marais, i. 290.

[2] The *Journal de l'Abbé Dorsanne* gives a history of these conflicts over the Unigenitus which is equally accurate and tedious. The literature of the subject is very copious.

contest continued to be waged for more than a generation, with mutual recrimination, with persecution by those who were in power, and bad language by those who were out of power.

These efforts to induce an acceptance of the Unigenitus, and whatever apparent success attended them, were urged by Dubois as arguments for his elevation to the cardinalate. The intrigues by which he at last received that office are interesting, because they were by no means without precedent. Dubois had more to promise and more to give than most aspirants for the purple, and therefore more was required of him. But other promotions were obtained by equally corrupt means. The politics of the Roman Curia have been purified since this era; the standard of honor and honesty has been raised at the Vatican, as well as with most European governments.

In 1718, a Jesuit agent at Rome began to intrigue with Clement XI. for Dubois's promotion. The idea was at first broached without the knowledge of Orleans, and the abbé seems to have had some hesitation in revealing to his patron the extent of his ambition. Curiously enough, he resorted to a Protestant government for aid, and both George I. and Stanhope wrote, urging the regent to increase the consideration and influence of his minister by securing his promotion as a cardinal.[1] It was by services such as these, instead of by enormous pensions, that the English government requited Dubois for his steadfast adherence to the English alliance. The obligation was the same in either case, but to ask assistance for his ambitious schemes was less degrading than to take his pay in hard cash.

[1] Stanhope to Stair, June 27, 1719; George I. to regent, November 14, 1719.

The abbé need have had no hesitation in asking the regent for aid. Even if his Christian character was not in all respects fitting for a prince of the church, that fact did not disturb Orleans, and he thought, undoubtedly, that Dubois was quite as proper a man to belong to the College of Cardinals as many who were already members. The regent wrote the Pope in the abbé's behalf, and he received the official nomination of France. Notwithstanding this, his trials had only begun.

Clement XI. was a subtle, wily man; he was old, slow to reach a decision, and most unwilling to allow it to become irrevocable. He entertained no strong affection for France or the regent. The long quarrels over the Unigenitus had irritated him; the independent character of the Duke of Orleans was not regarded with favor at the Vatican; the Pope knew that Dubois was greedy to become a cardinal, and he was in no haste to make him one. The applicant stated his claims for the promotion. "We have at heart," he wrote, "the glory of God and of religion, the honor of the Holy See, and the reputation of the Pope."[1] Doubtless this was much, but it was not enough. In November, Clement announced the names of ten new cardinals, and that of Dubois was not among them. Two Frenchmen were included in the list, but not the all-powerful minister.

This was a severe blow. It was now intimated that if the English Pretender could be induced to give to Dubois the nomination which the papacy still accorded to that fugitive sovereign, all might be well. The Pope felt bound to give pecuniary aid to one who had

[1] Dubois à Lafiteau, August 9, 1719. Lafiteau was shortly afterwards made Bishop of Sisteron.

sacrificed a crown rather than renounce the faith, and this was sometimes burdensome.[1] If a subsidy could be procured from France, it would be of great assistance both to the Pope and the Pretender, and Dubois's nomination would be assured by this act of benevolence. This suggestion was not acceptable. "I will do my duty with fidelity and zeal," wrote Dubois, "but an honest man grows weary if one haggles with him, and will grant no grace unless he pays for it." [2]

The situation was indeed an embarrassing one. Dubois had asked and received the assistance of George I.; his political fortunes rested on the English alliance; he had signed the treaty by which France agreed to give no aid nor succor to the Jacobite cause. What would be his position if it should appear that he was sending money to the Pretender, and relying on the influence of that prince to obtain his promotion as a cardinal? "Dubois," said one who admired his talents more than his virtues, "has ability enough to negotiate with Heaven itself, if negotiations were carried on there." [3] His intrigues at Rome showed that this praise was not excessive. During all his efforts to be made a cardinal, he had the aid both of the Hanoverian king and of the Stuart exile, and he succeeded in concealing from the English ministers his new and intimate relations with the Chevalier of St. George. Before giving any money to the Pretender, Dubois suggested that direct bribery might prove more efficacious. "Would not 300,000 livres distributed among the family of the Pope con-

[1] "Un heros de la Catholicité," Dubois justly styled the Pretender. — Dubois à Rohan, May 10, 1721.

[2] Dubois à Sisteron, March 14, 1720.

[3] *Journal de Marais*, ii. 220.

clude the matter more easily than by the intervention of that prince?" he inquired.[1] Apparently it was thought not: 50,000 crowns were given the chevalier. "The couriers from Paris to Rome are never empty-handed, like those from Rome to Paris," wrote the abbé sadly.[2] The chevalier was profuse in his thanks. "I have not words to express what I feel towards the regent and his minister," he said; "they possess in perfection the art of gaining friends." He solicited Dubois's nomination from the Pope, remained constant to his interests, and did everything in his power to earn the money which he received.

Dubois was now impatient to obtain his promotion without delay. These bargains were dishonorable, he justly said, and to remain so long a suppliant was disgraceful to one of his position; moreover, and worst of all, the Pope was very old.[3] He described his labors in the cause of the Unigenitus, and the peace of the church which he had obtained; he dwelt on the services which, as a cardinal, he could render the Holy See at the great Congress of Cambray which was soon to assemble.[4] Nor was this all. He pictured the material benefits which the Pope and his family might anticipate, with a naïveté that was characteristic, but was not dignified. "I need not repeat what it will be my glory and my pleasure to furnish, both for his Holiness and for Cardinal Albani, attentions, gratifications, engravings, books, jewels, presents of every sort; every day will see something new and pleasing, so soon as I have the right to show my gratitude and can do

[1] Dubois à Sisteron, June 22, 1720.
[2] Dubois à Sisteron, March 24, 1720.
[3] Dubois à Sisteron.
[4] Dubois à Gualteroi, March 27, 1720.

it honorably. . . . If his Holiness will put me in that situation, there will be never a day of his life when he will not receive from me something to console or to amuse him, which will make him look for every post with eagerness. His wishes cannot exceed my desire to gratify them." [1]

It was a hard-hearted Pope who could resist such a picture, but still Clement promised, and still he failed to perform. Dubois poured out his complaints with vehemence. "Where you are," he wrote his agent, "is a labyrinth, from which perhaps one can never escape. Services already rendered count for nothing; promises are made only to obtain new favors; the life of an aspirant is consumed in vain hopes and indecent bargains; no man of sense or honor will spend his days in this purgatory." [2] "Speak no more to the Pope about the matter," he said later, "and write no more about it." [3] The abbé's withdrawal was estimated at its just value by his servants. "We must serve the minister in spite of himself," wrote his confidential secretary. The Chevalier of St. George was sincerely friendly to Dubois, and was less familiar with the artifices of the Vatican. He was plunged in grief when he was told of the withdrawal. Clement received the news in a less seemly manner, and only smiled at the intelligence; he knew well that those who had the lust for the purple abandoned its pursuit only with life.[4]

The pretense of indifference was not long continued. Dubois's agent continued his assaults, and Clement at

[1] Dubois à Sisteron, June 22, 1720.
[2] Dubois à Sisteron, April 17, 1720.
[3] Dubois à Sisteron, August 13, 1720.
[4] Sisteron à Dubois, September 15, 1720.

last gave him a formal and explicit promise to make the abbé a cardinal. With a zeal that showed some lack of confidence in the papal word, Sisteron besought the Pope to put the promise in writing, but this the wily Italian declined to do.[1] Fresh appliances were brought to bear to induce him to keep his word. Through the influence of Dubois's English friends, the Emperor consented to write, soliciting his nomination. Not only did the abbé obtain the assistance of the Emperor, whose ally he had been, but he was adroit enough to extract letters in his favor from Philip V., whose plans he had so bitterly opposed. The elevation of Dubois to the cardinalate became a European question, and engaged the attention of the statesmen of every country.

Perhaps the English would have been less zealous in their efforts, if they had known that their friend was assuring the Pretender of his zeal for his restoration to the throne, and that he directed his gratitude to be expressed "to his Britannic Majesty the king of England."[2] Probably, however, they would have thought that all of Dubois's promises and fair words would have little effect upon his policy, and in this they would have been right. "No consideration for my own affairs," he wrote his agent, "will turn me from my duties as a minister, or from the interests of the state, which are determined by the general position of Europe. It cannot be expected, however, that the public will do me the justice to believe this."[3] This statement was very nearly the truth. Dubois

[1] Sisteron à Dubois, December 17, 1720.

[2] Dubois à Tencin, July 11, 1721; Dubois à Gualterio, August 7, 1721.

[3] Dubois à Sisteron, January 20, 1721.

certainly made inconsistent promises; he put himself under obligations to any one who would help him; but the action which he took as a minister of the state was usually controlled by considerations of sagacious policy, and with very little regard to expectations which he had held out, but did not choose to fulfill.

His agents continued their endeavors at Rome. Lafiteau threw himself at the Pope's feet, praying for a written promise; he pressed Clement's hands with filial tenderness. "Give me the word of life," he exclaimed. "By Tuesday you shall have the writing," replied the Pope.[1] In the mean time 20,000 crowns were promised the Pretender the moment that Clement executed the written promise, and 30,000 more when the promotion was made.[2] At last the paper was signed and delivered to the chevalier, and he announced the news to the applicant with great joy.[3] The abbé had only to see it, to discover that he had again been trifled with. There was indeed, nominally, a promise to appoint him a cardinal, but it was burdened with such conditions, and involved in such uncertainties, that it amounted to nothing. Clement was not much longer to be disturbed by these solicitations. In March, 1721, he died, without making Dubois a cardinal. As the Pope lay on his deathbed, his nephew endeavored, in the intervals of delirium,

[1] Sisteron à Dubois, January 14, 1721.

[2] Sisteron à Dubois, December 31, 1720. "Thirty thousand crowns our Mæcenas says you may promise Cardinal Albani the day the Pope consummates this grace." — Pecquet à Sisteron, January 19, 1721. Albani was the Pope's nephew. He was short in his accounts, and demanded the money at once. It was finally given him to buy his assistance in the conclave. — Sisteron à Pecquet, February 4, 1721; Rohan à Dubois, May 15, 1721.

[3] Jacobus Rex à Dubois, January 15, 1721.

to earn the reward offered by obtaining the abbé's elevation. The importunities ceased only when life was extinct.

In the election of the new Pope, the influence of the French faction was exerted for whoever would promise Dubois's speedy promotion in return for their support.[2] One hundred thousand crowns also were sent to Rome with which to buy votes in the conclave.[3] Cardinals were purchased then with the same facility that ward politicians in New York city are purchased now. The efforts of the French were successful; on May 8, 1721, Cardinal Conti was chosen Pope, and took the name of Innocent XIII. He had entered into a solemn bargain by which Dubois was to be made a cardinal, on condition that the regent allowed a sufficient pension to the Chevalier of St. George to relieve the Holy See from a portion of its burdens.[4]

Notwithstanding this unholy bargain, the new Pope delayed in making the promotion. The pension of the Pretender was arranged in a manner satisfactory to him, and Dubois's agents threatened to make public the agreement by which Innocent had secured his election. This would have been equally disagreeable to both parties, and it was not done. Resort was had to the more usual process of liberal bribery. The Pope was anxious to buy a library which was for sale, but he had not the money. It was bought for him and cost 15,000 crowns. "This has only served to excite the appetite of a family which is poor, numerous, and

[1] Sisteron à Dubois, March 19, 1721.

[2] Sisteron à Dubois, March 14, April 7, 1721, *et pas.*

[3] *Cor. de Rome*, 626, 303. Dubois à Rohan, "Pour mettre votre excellence en état de ne pas manquer l'acquisition de quelques voix avantageuses."

[4] Rohan à Dubois, May 5, 1721.

hungry," wrote the Abbé Tencin. "Try to send at least 10,000 pistoles more. One can do nothing here without money." [1] Dubois was in despair at these constant demands, which had now extended over three years. "I send you 10,000 pistoles," he writes Cardinal Rohan.[2] "I had to borrow it on my own account. . . . Do not use this money except in two cases: one is, to satisfy engagements for something which has actually been done, instead of something which is going to be done; the other is, if you have need of it yourself. In these two cases I consent to my own ruin." [3] He was still more explicit with his favorite agent, the Abbé Tencin. "I am in such distress that I can suffer no more; there is no headdress that costs more extravagantly than the hat of a cardinal. . . . I can get no money from the royal treasury. . . . I have no property. I owe 250,000 francs which cry for payment. . . . Such are the subjects of my meditations, since receiving your letters. I am not dead, and that is something." [4]

It is always darkest just before daybreak. When Dubois was inditing these despairing letters, the contest was already over and the victory won. In the Consistory of July 16, 1721, the Abbé Dubois, Archbishop of Cambray, was promoted by Innocent XIII. to be a cardinal of the Catholic Church.

[1] Tencin à Dubois, July, 1721. The chief objection suggested to Conti as Pope was that his relations were poor. — *Cor. de Rome*, 628, 74. Experience showed that the cost of providing for a number of poor relations was considerable, and that each Pope saw that his own were taken care of.

[2] They cost 300,000 francs, on account of the high rate of exchange.

[3] Dubois à Rohan, July 23, 1721.

[4] Dubois à Tencin, July 23, 1721.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CLOSE OF THE REGENCY.

1721–1723.

Only one thing now remained for Dubois's ambition, and he was not long delayed in its acquisition. The office of a secretary of state seemed beneath the dignity of a cardinal, and he asked to be made prime minister. For sixty years no one had held that position in France; the very name had been odious to Louis XIV. But Orleans was easily brought to believe that with increased authority Dubois could relieve him still more from the burdens of the state; he would have found it difficult to say no to his adroit and pertinacious adviser, whatever his feelings might have been. On August 23, 1722, Dubois was declared prime minister, and he succeeded to the office which had remained vacant since the death of Mazarin.

He was now approaching seventy, but his industry and his love of affairs increased with advancing years; everything passed through his hands, and he begrudged the slightest division of the authority which he had acquired. His bad temper was aggravated by excessive labor and by disease, and interviews with him were often of a stormy nature. His anger sometimes degenerated into frenzy, said a displeased ambassador, until one could not confer with

him with any comfort; moreover he would not keep his word.[1]

Dubois had checked the unquiet ambition of Alberoni and Philip V., but he now sought to restore intimate relations between the French and Spanish courts by matrimonial alliances. These overtures were received with delight by Philip and his wife. If fortune did not destine them to sit on the French throne, their greatest consolation would be to see their daughter the wife of the French king. An alliance was agreed upon between Louis XV. and a three-year-old daughter of Philip V. Orleans announced the news to the young king; his usual silent indifference was somewhat disturbed, and he shed a few tears at the prospect, but he submitted to his fate. The infant princess was sent to Paris to be educated for her future position. The regent's paternal ambition was also gratified. One of his daughters was married to Philip's oldest son, the heir apparent to the Spanish throne. The arrival of the princess in Spain was celebrated in a manner fitting the traditions of that country: an *auto da fé* was performed in her honor. Though heresy had been crushed in Spain, Jews and witches still furnished food for the Inquisition, and over fifteen hundred persons perished at the stake during the reign of Philip V.[2]

The Spanish Infanta was greeted with celebrations

[1] *Dis. Veneziani*, filza 212, 148. Elsewhere he speaks of "La sua applicazione indeffessa, gli transporti di una ira mai tranquilla, e di una ambizione non mai sazia." — *Ib.*, 145.

[2] Llorente, *History of the Inquisition.* The French minister, Maulevrier, writes of nearly one hundred persons burned at the stake in a few cities, during four years that he was in Spain. Of these nearly one half were women. The figures are collected from his letters by Lémontey.

more in harmony with the tastes of the French people. All Paris was decorated in her honor; she passed under triumphal arches, whose inscriptions declared her to be the hope of the Gauls; the judges of the Parliament, the professors of the University, the literati of the Academy, received her with ornate and tedious orations; bonfires and fireworks proclaimed the joy of the French at the arrival of a princess who was not destined to become their queen. The education of those of royal blood at least fitted them for the life of display to which they were destined. The room was crowded one day when the Infanta was eating her dinner, and the heat was intense. "It is very warm," said the four-year-old princess, "but I prefer to endure it and let myself be seen by my people."[1] The two countries were united by treaties, as well as by matrimonial alliances, and the French agreed to do all in their power to secure for Spain the restoration of Gibraltar. These efforts were unsuccessful. Within three years the Infanta was ignominiously sent back to Spain by the regent's successor in power; Orleans's daughter had become a widow, and was fairly chased out of the country by her Spanish relatives; the alliance between France and Spain was as unimportant in its results as it was brief in its duration.

In February, 1723, Louis XV. completed his thirteenth year; by the law of France he then assumed power in person, and the regency terminated. In October of 1722, Louis was consecrated king at Rheims. If a spectator had regarded names only, he might have believed himself in feudal France, witnessing the consecration of a sovereign of the house

[1] Duchess of Ventadour to Queen of Spain, July 20, 1722.

of Capet. The dukes of Burgundy, Normandy, and Aquitaine, the counts of Toulouse, Flanders, and Champagne, were there to support the crown; the Constable of France stood by, holding the sword of his office; the sacred ampulla, which had been sent from heaven, was brought in solemn state from its resting-place; the king was invested with an ecclesiastical as well as a political character, and he received the communion in both kinds; after the ceremony, he touched those afflicted by disease, as had been done in the days of faith.[1] Of all this ceremonial there was little that was not unreal. The peers of Charlemagne were fictions, and the crown was supported by nobles who bore, for that ceremony only, the ancient historic names of Normandy and Aquitaine, of Flanders and Toulouse; the constable was a fictitious constable, arrayed in the insignia of an office that was extinct; the archbishop who bore the sacred ampulla did not believe that it had come from heaven; the sick, pressing to be touched, were brought to the ceremonial, not in the faith of being healed, but in the hope of receiving alms. A crown which purported to be that of Charlemagne was used in the consecration. It was too large, and had to be replaced by a smaller one, which the sovereign actually wore. This was symbolic. The ancient conception of the royal office had outgrown the actual possessor. The crown of Charlemagne was too large for Louis XV. The sword of justice with which he was girt he was unable to wield; the vows which he made to redress the wrong, to humble the proud and exalt the lowly, were as idle words as when the Bishop of Laon asked those assembled in the church if they consented to receive

[1] *Rélation du Sacre du Roy*, 1722.

Louis XV. for their king. The ancient conception of kingship no longer corresponded with its actual character. An acute observer at the consecration of Louis XV. might have foreboded the approaching end of the French monarchy, because the reality differed so largely from the ceremonial; he might have felt that an institution where so much was idle form had ceased to possess actual usefulness; that, instead of being a living force, it was becoming an empty tradition. One who recognized to the fullest extent what the monarchy had done for France in the past might well have questioned if the time was not approaching when it could render no further service, when it must join the phantom dukes and counts and constables whose names still resounded in the ancient cathedral of Rheims, but whose offices had long ceased to exist.

The healing powers belonging to the sacred person of the sovereign were regarded with incredulity, even by those who had insisted that he should profess to exercise them. After the ceremony a zealous curé reported that one of his parishioners had been touched and cured, but he was ordered to say no more about the matter. The entire community was not equally skeptical; the age of miracles was not believed by all to be wholly passed. When a great fire was raging at Paris, Cardinal Noailles hastened to the conflagration, exposed the sacrament, and the flames were checked.[1] It was reported that the body of a Calvinist minister who had been buried in Switzerland was repeatedly thrown out from the earth where it was placed; investigation showed that underneath this unquiet grave a Catholic bishop had been buried

[1] MS. *Journal de la Régence*, ii. 986.

two centuries before, and it was manifest that his ashes would not rest tranquilly beneath the remains of a heretic.[1] When we find this story told in detail by a man who had sufficient intelligence to write a respectable contemporary history, we may be sure that such a fable was accepted by others than the most ignorant. Miracles performed in Paris itself are vouched for by a lawyer whose intelligence was acute, and whose literary culture was sufficient to make him regarded as a fit candidate for the French Academy. A woman who had been infirm and paralyzed for years was healed of her malady by the holy sacrament. All Paris, we are told, went to see her, and the most incredulous believed; a hundred witnesses attested the miracle; the Te Deum was sung in celebration of this victory of the faith; it was rumored that even the poet Arouet, the future Voltaire, had seen the woman and declared himself converted.[2] This report was not confirmed. Some claimed that the poet had indeed been converted by the miracle, but had again relapsed into his skepticism.[3]

Though Voltaire was still a young man, he was already a well-known character at Paris. He had been one of the victims of a government that was usually lenient. In 1716, when he was only twenty-two, he was exiled for a year; in 1717, partly on the suspicion of being the author of verses written by some one else, and partly on account of verses which he had written himself, he was confined in the Bastille. He had already shown that he had alike the ability and the courage to say very disagreeable things, and the government made no mistake in treating him as a dan-

[1] MS. *Journal de la Régence*, ii. 833.

[2] *Journal de Marais*, iii. 192.

[3] *Ib.*, 217.

gerous subject. Voltaire's imprisonment did not operate as a deterrent. Immediately after his release, his play of "Œdipe" was produced. The enemies of the regent claimed to find in the piece a denunciation of his crimes; Orleans himself, with excellent judgment, declined to recognize the allusion, even if any was intended, and he applauded the play as vigorously as his critics. Though Voltaire had published some very abusive verses about Orleans, the duke showed himself superior to resentment; he admired the young author's talents, forgave his offenses, and gave him a pension.

The literary merits of Voltaire attracted attention, but they did not at once obtain universal recognition. St. Simon, naturally enough, was offended at the notoriety of a man whose birth, he thought, should condemn him to obscurity. "He was the son of my father's notary," he writes, "whom I have seen many times bringing papers to be signed; but he could do nothing with this libertine son.[1] Arouet was properly sent into exile," he adds, "for writing most impudent verses." Marais, who had better literary taste than St. Simon, though he had much less literary talent, was also slow to recognize the genius of the young man who was so much talked about. We may accept what he said as a pretty just index of contemporary opinion among the educated classes. Voltaire sought to pay his court to Dubois by comparing him to Richelieu, with an insinuation that he himself occupied the relative position of Voiture. "He was bold enough to put himself on a level with Voiture," says Marais, "but he is very far from that."[2] "Voltaire is a fool," he writes later, "who despises Sophocles and Corneille, tries to be a member of the court and

[1] St. Simon, xiv. 10. [2] *Journal*, September, 1722.

gets bastinadoed, and who will never know anything because he thinks that he knows it all."[1] But Voltaire's genius triumphed over his critics. "He is the greatest poet we have," writes Marais, after the production of "Mariamne" in 1725.

Voltaire's reputation was not sufficient to excite any sympathy for his misadventures. "He has gone to Brussels to compare notes with Rousseau about the whippings administered to the poets," says Marais in 1722.[2] For men of letters this was indeed, as has been truly said, the age of wood. A book could be written on the corporal punishments inflicted on poets during the early part of the eighteenth century. Voltaire was the chief sufferer, but he was far from being the only one. J. B. Rousseau and many others shared in the common fate. Such summary proceedings were so in the customs of the time that no one, except the sufferer, was at all disturbed by them. When Voltaire received his famous chastisement by the order of the Chevalier of Rohan, the sentiments of one of the most liberal thinkers of the day led him to no more violent censure than to call it an amusing tragedy.[3]

Notwithstanding these misadventures, the influence of the regency was unquestionably advantageous to letters. There was more promise for literature under the regent, when writers were caned, than under Louis XIV., when they were pensioned. Orleans was liberal to writers and to men of science, but he allowed them to follow their own inclinations; he rewarded those who displayed talent, and not those who bestowed flattery. In thought, as in trade, the breath of freedom was allowed to fan the air, and lessened the

[1] Marais, December, 1722.
[2] Marais, *Journal*, ii. 358.
[3] Argenson, i. 56.

danger of suffocation. Under Louis XIV., Voltaire might have ended his days in the Bastille; but quite as probably his career would have been confined to writing stately plays, interspersed with judicious praise of the great monarch. The influence of English thought upon Voltaire was important; but during the eight years that he was forming his character and his style, he could have found no better intellectual atmosphere than that of the regency of Philip of Orleans.

Dubois appreciated the advantage of having literature on the side of the government, and he recognized also the form which would now be most effective in France; he tried to enlist those in his cause who were able to ridicule their adversaries. The different spirit engendered under freer modes of thought was reflected in the form of literature; the style grew lighter, the sentences became shorter. There are great names in the French literature of the seventeenth century, but much that was then written lacks the qualities which now seem typical of French style, — lightness of touch and delicacy of expression. Voltaire said that the Jansenists were men who loved long sentences, and they were by no means the only offenders. Dubois himself exemplified some of the qualities that were becoming predominant in French literature. Though we can find much in his enormous diplomatic correspondence that is vulgar, there is little that is tedious. If the official correspondence under Louis XIV. was always dignified, it was often wearisome.

Montesquieu began his literary career during the regency. In 1721, the "Persian Letters" appeared, a book which combined literary graces that delighted the world with merciless satire of many of the defects of government and society. That such a book should

have been written, that it should have freely circulated and have been prodigiously admired, shows that the regency was the beginning of an era of freer thought in France.

Orleans took a special interest in another phase of intellectual activity which was destined to have a greater influence upon the beliefs and conduct of mankind than the writings of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists. His tastes had early led him to studies which, if they were not very scientific, at least gave him an interest in what science might accomplish. He told the Academy of Science that the secretaryship for that body would be the boon which he should demand of Louis XV. when the king attained his majority. He established an academy for the improvement of the implements and appliances of the mechanical arts. He offered a liberal pension to Réaumur, whose discoveries did more for the iron and steel manufactures of France than the tariffs of Colbert. The influence of scientific and economical investigation during the century was as important as that of pure literature, and such studies received a new impetus under the regent. They were the more important, because the French mind had often shown an invincible prejudice against new ideas. This was illustrated not only by the reception given to the discoveries of Newton, but by the opposition to an innovation of more practical interest to the people than the theory of gravitation. Inoculation was introduced into Europe at this period. In no country was small-pox a more terrible scourge than in France. It was equally destructive in the highest and in the lowest classes of society; it claimed as many victims among those who enjoyed comfort and luxury, and could command the best medi-

cal attendance, as among those who had neither money nor doctors. In no country was the means of prevention received with less favor. Medical science does not seem to have been far advanced in France; the College of Medicine was as opposed to new ideas as the College of the Sorbonne: the satires of Molière on the doctors were not wholly undeserved. The medical profession were united in opposition to inoculation. Many of the people were still sufficiently ignorant to be influenced by the nonsense talked about its being impious. The Bourbons were the last royal family in Europe to adopt the use of inoculation, and this was not until the time of Louis XVI.

As a sign of the conflicting intellectual tendencies during the regency, it is worthy of remark that the worship of the Sacred Heart then made its first decided progress. Marie Alacoque was a nun at Paray, whose career had attracted attention under the reign of Louis XIV. She was sickly from childhood, and her health was still further impaired by the penances in which she found happiness. She fasted constantly, slept on thorns, flogged herself with frenzy, kept her arms heavily chained until the flesh was worn away. To live without torturing herself she declared to be the most insupportable of tortures.

These excesses in a young girl, weak in body and mind, naturally resulted in visions and hallucinations. Marie's thoughts inclined towards the passionate adoration of Christ, as a person as well as a God, which not unfrequently appears in those of similar temperament. She was favored with visions of Jesus, and was often visited by an angel who came as his representative; she was joined to our Lord in spiritual betrothal, and was allowed to address Him as her

spouse. Her affection was expressed with that strange mingling of devotion and sensuality that is found in such cases. "My greatest pleasure would be to love our amiable Saviour with a love as ardent as that of a seraph," she wrote. "I would be well content in hell, if there I might love Him." She told of the tender caresses bestowed upon her by her celestial spouse. The final miracle might have been expected in one of her condition. Christ appeared to her, took her heart, and displayed to her his own. Another vision immediately afterwards ordered the establishment of a special worship of the Sacred Heart, and designated the day to be set apart for this solemnity.

The visions of Marie Alacoque attracted little attention in the convent of which she was a member. They were attributed to mental disease, rather than to divine favor, and excited only the contempt of most of those to whom they were related. A Jesuit priest, who had been Marie's confidant, first undertook to establish upon the basis of these hallucinations the worship of the Sacred Heart. The Jesuits as a body adopted this idea, and pressed it with the vigor and the pertinacity of that famous order.

A terrible calamity which now visited France assisted their endeavors. In 1720, Marseilles and some of the other cities of Provence were devastated by the plague, to which they were exposed periodically by filth and the lack of sanitary measures. Nearly a hundred thousand persons died. The afflicted cities suffered all the misery which such pestilences bring in their train. Amid panic, consternation, and despair, the Bishop of Marseilles distinguished himself by heroic devotion to the care of the suffering and the dying. The fame of his Christian zeal spread to

other lands, and is celebrated by Pope.[1] He was an earnest friend of the Jesuits, and during this season of pestilence he sought Heaven's succor by solemnly dedicating his diocese to the devotion of the Sacred Heart. The innovation met with strenuous opposition in France, but the untiring zeal of its advocates secured its triumph. The canonization of Marie Alacoque was demanded, as the official ratification of the devotion of which she had been the first exponent. It was refused. When the order of the Jesuits was dissolved in the last century, the prospect of success seemed hopeless. But those who had undertaken the task were not the men to abandon it; in 1864, the beatification of Marie Alacoque by Pius IX. closed one hundred and fifty years of struggle with victory; it added another to the long list of triumphs of Jesuit over Jansenist principles in the Catholic Church.[2]

The growth of Paris went on during the regency at accelerated speed. This was sought to be checked by legislative enactment: an edict declared that Paris was becoming too large, communication was difficult, and effective police measures were impossible; any further increase in population must result in the ruin of the city.[3] Limits were fixed beyond which it must not grow; they were as little regarded as those which had been established by similar legislation in the past. Causes more efficacious than any edicts ordering them to stay away were operating to lead people

[1] "Why drew Marseilles' good bishop purer breath,
When nature sickened and each gale was death?"

[2] The *Histoire de la bienheureuse Marguerite Marie*, by the Vicar-General of Orleans, in 1874, gives an account of the life of Marie Alacoque which is interesting for many reasons.

[3] *Anc. Lois Françaises*, xxi. 273, 1724.

to Paris. Thousands had been lured there by the Mississippi speculation, and many of them remained. The city furnished, in increasing degree, the two chief inducements which draw people to great centres: business was more active, and there was more opportunity for gain; pleasures of every sort, operas, theatres, balls, flourished during the regency, and there was more opportunity for amusement. While the attractions which Paris offered were thus augmented, the facilities for reaching the city were also increased. The beginning was made of that system of thoroughly constructed roads which excited Arthur Young's admiration. The first paved highway from Paris to Rheims was constructed for the coronation of Louis XV.; the journey of the young king from the capital to the place where he was to be crowned brought prosperity in its wake. Canals were enlarged, new bridges were built and old ones repaired.

These improvements were of advantage to all, but they tended especially to augment the population and influence of Paris. The growth of centres depends upon the facility with which they can be reached. Good roads increase the volume of trade, which seeks a large market; increasing business brings an increasing population. When means of communication were as imperfect as in France during the feudal period, the cities were proportionately small; they increased in size as a journey to them involved less of risk, fatigue, and expense.

The growth of Paris was a fact of political and of social significance. As communication between the capital and the rest of France became more rapid and more frequent, it could exercise an influence which would have been impossible a century before; the tran-

quillity of the provinces was disturbed by the unrest of the city. French history for centuries exhibited the spectacle of the steady development of the monarchical power. One can trace, with almost the same distinctness, the increase in the influence of Paris upon the rest of the kingdom during the three centuries preceding the Revolution. So important has been the effect, both intellectual and political, which the life of this great city has produced upon France and upon Europe, that this change is, in some respects, as worthy of attention as the development of the monarchy. In 1721, the population of Paris was estimated at 800,000 people.[1] This estimate was too large, but that city probably contained one thirtieth of the population of France; four centuries before, less than one fiftieth of the entire population lived in Paris; it now has about one fifteenth.

Paris increased in attractiveness as well as in size, and this change produced important social results. Under Louis XIV., Versailles had been the centre of French life; society and literature were subject to the influence of the court; the atmosphere of Versailles affected every phase of French art and thought. This ceased to be the case under the regency. Versailles lost the position of influence which it had held, and this was never regained. Under Louis XV. and Louis XVI. that palace was again the ordinary residence of the king, but it was no longer regarded as the most charming spot in the world. Paris was now thought, by those of every class, to possess greater attractions. During the reign of Louis XIV., the existence of a great noble was passed in the society of the monarch; he heard nothing and was interested

[1] MSS. cited in *Mém. des Intendants, Généralité de Paris.*

in nothing outside of the court circle; Parisian society was abandoned to lawyers and bourgeois. But under Louis XV. the descendants of those who had spent their lives following the great monarch through the halls and gardens of Versailles found their chief amusement in Parisian salons. There they met with men of every class, — with those who were famous in literature and science and art, with those who had new views to advance and new policies to advocate. The best music was now to be heard at Paris; the best theatrical performances relied on popular support, instead of on the patronage of the monarch or of some great nobleman; writers no longer measured their success by the favor they obtained at court. The regent did much to make the capital attractive; it was his favorite residence; he preferred the excitement of new ideas to the courtly platitudes of Versailles. The example set by Orleans was followed during the century. The liberal spirit which appeared in many of the aristocracy during the eighteenth century must be attributed to the change in their modes of life. They were affected by ideas which would never have found entrance in a comparatively small and restricted circle, like that which had gathered about Louis XIV. The results of such a change were to modify the views of many of those of the highest rank, to make philosophers of nobles and republicans of aristocrats, to add to the fascination of Parisian life, and to extend the influence of Parisian thought.

There was ground, however, for the complaint that the size of Paris furnished facilities for crime, and rendered the police inefficient. Certainly it was possible to maintain good order in the city, but not with the system which was in force. A great city, whose guardians

were scattered and whose streets were dimly lighted, offered numerous opportunities for the burglar and the assassin. The influx of great numbers of men in search of fortune during the Mississippi excitement, and the desperate condition in which many were left at the end of that speculation, increased the amount of crime.

One criminal succeeded in attracting the special attention of the community. We may still speak, without impropriety, of the famous Cartouche, who gained for himself a name like that of his English contemporary, Jonathan Wild. His talents developed early, and when he was little over twenty the thought of Cartouche excited consternation in all who had anything that it was worth while to steal. Twice he was arrested, and succeeded in making his escape. Large rewards were offered for his apprehension, but there were few who cared to risk an encounter with a man whose courage and strength were proverbial. The success of his exploits and his long immunity invested him with a halo of romance; he had large bands of followers, and some young gentlemen were tempted to ally their fortunes with those of this hero of crime.

Cartouche began life as a Parisian gamin; a few years spent with a band of gypsies helped to develop the address, both of body and mind, which made him a leader among his associates. He was for a while a soldier, and, in those days of imperfect discipline and irregular pay, that career often proved the training for a criminal. Cartouche utilized the results of his military education; he organized a body of followers, both male and female, among whom he preserved a sort of irregular discipline. Their crimes soon filled Paris with consternation. The era of Law furnished unusual opportunities for their operations, and Car-

touche and his followers lived on the fat of the land. He appeared in innumerable disguises, and of the many stories of his exploits under the guise of a man of fashion some are probably true. A man who was robbed on his way to a dinner party, when he at last reached his destination, recognized two of his assailants among the guests. The captain of the band adopted rules of courtesy for his troop: they were forbidden to kill, unless it was necessary in their own defense; those who had been once robbed were furnished with cards which secured them immunity in the future; articles taken which were valuable to the owner, but could not be sold by the robbers, were promptly and politely returned.

Cartouche extended the sphere of his operations beyond Paris. He sent his lieutenants to meet the ambassador of the Great Turk, and they robbed him of part of his treasure; others attacked the stage-coach coming from Lyons, and obtained an enormous plunder. The fame of Cartouche became legendary in Paris; some even said that there was no such man. His name was called in court on the charge of some crime; some one in the crowd cried out, "Present!" and most of the audience at once took to flight.

Sooner or later, treachery checks the career of many illustrious men, and so it was with Cartouche. In October, 1721, a soldier, who was one of his accomplices, agreed to show the place where he was concealed. Forty men, known for their courage, undertook the task of capturing the criminal. They succeeded in surprising him in his bed. Six loaded pistols were on the table near by, but he was seized and bound before he could make use of them.

The news of this arrest caused much excitement in

Paris. In one respect the great robber was a disappointment, for he proved to be an exceptionally small man. Cartouche, like Louis XIV., was not so tall as he had seemed. A play describing his exploits was at once composed, and was acted at the Français for thirteen nights. It had a prodigious success. All Paris flocked to see it. Cartouche himself narrowly missed an opportunity to watch the spectacle of his own exploits. He had been confined in the Chatelet, and he succeeded in removing a stone, and making his way by means of the fossé into the cellar of a little shop. But fortune had deserted her former favorite. A little dog heard the noise, began a furious barking, and roused every one in the house. Some soldiers were near by, heard the disturbance, entered, and stumbled on Cartouche, who had not been able to strike off the chains on his hands and legs. He was again confined, and was chained with such severity that escape was impossible.

The torture was still used in France in trials where the punishment might be death. As death could be inflicted for almost every crime, torture was applied with frequency. Cartouche was kept on the rack for several hours. He bore the pain manfully, and refused to disclose the names of his accomplices. He was sentenced to death. When he reached the place of execution, either his courage failed him, or he was disappointed because there were no signs that his followers intended to attempt a rescue. He offered to confess, and obtained a short reprieve. He disclosed the detail of innumerable robberies and some murders, and he gave the names of a long list of accomplices. Whether his confession had been the result of weakness or of spite, it gained him only a few hours of life. An im-

mense crowd had long been gathered at the Place de Grève to see the end of the famous criminal. Some waited there forty-eight hours, eating on the spot, lest they should chance to lose the spectacle. At last Cartouche was brought to the place of execution, where he was broken alive on the wheel. The severe torture to which he had been subjected had one merciful effect: he soon expired on the wheel.

The trial of his accomplices long occupied the attention of the courts. Nearly four hundred were tried on the charge of being his followers. His brother, who was only fifteen, died under the torture. Great numbers, both of men and women, were hung or broken on the wheel. Ghastly sights were furnished, with the hope of inculcating the fear of the law in the Parisian youth. At the end of the Pont Neuf, the centre of Parisian life and business, corpses could frequently be seen dangling in the air. Many were hung by night. Long processions of men with flambeaux marched through the streets, leading the criminals, who were executed by the wavering light of the torches. The sight was more horrible than by day, and was probably thought to be a better deterrent of crime. Two of these ghastly processions, writes a citizen, went by his house in one evening.[1]

The majority of Louis XV. brought no change in the government of the state. Orleans resigned his power into the hands of the young king. He could justly claim that he had preserved order and avoided

[1] Barbier, January, 1722. The details about Cartouche and his accomplices are found in the journals of Barbier, Buvat, and Marais, and in his own confession. The *Gazette* of Paris has something on the subject, but newspapers in those days did not deserve the name.

war, and that he resigned his charge leaving France at peace with all the world. If any refutation were needed of the odious and absurd calumnies which accused Orleans of having murdered his kinsman, and of seeking to win a crown by the arts of a poisoner, the fact that the young prince, whose life alone stood between him and the throne, reached his majority in health and vigor was the most convincing proof of their falsity.

Orleans was always courteous and respectful to his ward, and Louis seems to have been attached to him, so far as he was capable of being attached to any one. The duke remained at the head of the government, and exercised practically the same authority after Louis's majority that he had possessed as regent. Dubois was retained in his position as prime minister, but his tenure of power was brief. His health had long been impaired, and he was now failing rapidly. In the summer of 1723, he was assured that his only chance of life was to submit to a severe and dangerous operation. It was with reluctance that he consented to this, and he was even less docile to those who offered religious succor for the peril which impended. His attendants wished that he should receive the viaticum before the operation was performed, but the cardinal was tenacious to the end for all that belonged to the rank which he had attained at the cost of such painful struggles. He said that there was a special ceremonial for cardinals, and he would receive the sacrament in no other way. There was no one at hand sufficiently learned in these matters to know what ceremonies were required for persons of this dignity, and the sacrament was not administered.[1] The doc-

[1] *Dis. Ven.*, 148, 212.

tors of his physical ills had no better success: an operation was performed, but it was too late to be of service; the cardinal died a few hours afterwards, on the 10th of August, 1723, only two years after his promotion to the cardinalate, and one year after he had attained the position of prime minister of France. He was sixty-six years old.

There was much that was sordid and ignoble in Dubois's character, but this was overshadowed by his qualities as a statesman, and by the advantages for France of the policy which he adopted. The news of his death was received with pleasure by the court, and without regret by the people; the same thing could be said of the deaths of Richelieu and Mazarin and Colbert; yet each of them had done great things for France. Even those who bore no love for Dubois were forced to admit that in his high position he had wasted no time on sensual pleasures; that he had shortened his life by unremitting labor; that he had tolerated neither fools nor flatterers; that he had secured peace for France; and that her position in Europe was more influential when the apothecary's son died, than it had been at the death of Louis the Great. The price of stocks fell when Dubois's death was announced, and those who had hated him most acknowledged their apprehensions of the grave complications that might ensue in Europe.[1]

The Duke of Orleans assumed the position which the death of Dubois left vacant. He felt, perhaps, some relief at being freed from a minister whose in-

[1] See journals of Marais and Barbier and the MS. dispatches of the Venetian ambassador for these expressions of public feeling. They were all unfriendly to Dubois, and we may accept what they say in his favor without fear of exaggeration.

fluence had grown to be oppressive, but his own tenure of office was not long enough to produce any important results. His health had long been declining; years of profligacy had undermined a good constitution, and had dulled an acute intellect. The duke would make no change in his habits of life; they had become so inveterate that probably he had not the power to alter them, even if he had the desire. Less than four months after Dubois's death Orleans was stricken by apoplexy and died suddenly. He was only forty-nine years of age. He had persisted in excesses, the results of which he knew would soon be fatal, until one could almost call his death a case of suicide.

The character of the Duke of Orleans appears plainly enough in the record of his life and of his administration. Both the one and the other were marked by grievous errors. An intellect of uncommon acuteness, enlightened desires for the public welfare, a breadth of view which was rare in public men, were rendered of little value to the world by incurable weaknesses of character. Notwithstanding this, the regency was a period whose importance in French history was out of proportion to the few years which it lasted, and to the paucity of actual results which were then accomplished. The form of government underwent no important change: the treatment of religious questions was almost the same when Orleans died as when he assumed power; the efforts of Law to build up a new commercial system resulted in bankruptcy; the reforms which the regent had planned he did not accomplish. But the political system of France was to be altered, not by the act of the governors, but by the act of the governed. Changes in religious, social,

and economical beliefs were the things of most importance in French history, as in all history.

It is here that we must find the influence of the regency on the development of France during the eighteenth century. If the form of government was the same at the end of that period as at the beginning, the intellectual atmosphere had changed; if industrial and financial experiments had resulted in failure, the way was prepared for attempts which should be more successful. Eight years constitute a brief period in history, but eight years, during which attention was turned toward the benefits that might result from modifications of existing conditions, were not without value to the world. If men could be left free to think for themselves, it was of little importance that they could not as yet turn their thoughts into action; the time for that was sure to come: if the idea could find lodgment that the object of society was to seek for future development instead of to preserve intact the heritage of the past, it was of small importance that the States General were not yet convened, or that religious persecutions were still allowed; the time was sure to come when the representatives of the people would be summoned, and when bigotry would cease to flourish.

The years of Louis XV.'s minority saw the beginning of the intellectual changes that, within seventy years, were to alter the government of France and the condition of the French people. His reign continued for half a century longer; at the end of that period French institutions were still nominally unaltered, but such modifications had taken place in political beliefs and in the conceptions of society and government, the demand for measures which should insure more equal

rights, greater material prosperity, and greater intellectual freedom had so increased, that it was apparent that the old régime was soon to be succeeded by a new and a very different political system. Whatever France was to become in the future, it was plain that she would never again be the France of Louis XIV.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MORALS OF THE REGENCY.

THE regency of Philip of Orleans is stigmatized as a period when morality was at the lowest ebb, when vice no longer paid to virtue the tribute of hypocrisy, when the austerity of the close of Louis XIV.'s reign was succeeded by avowed infidelity and unblushing debauchery. That it was an era of profligacy, no one can question. The dissipation of the regency was vulgar and unabashed; it was more offensive in its manifestations than any which existed under Louis XIV. Vice may be said to have paraded itself with flags flying and trumpets blowing. But the moral decline was less abrupt than is supposed; this epoch was condemned with unexampled severity, not merely because profligacy was extreme, but because the public was less inclined to pardon it. This was not altogether a sign of moral decadence. The virulence of contemporary criticism showed that the nation no longer regarded the immorality of its rulers as a matter which it had no right to consider, or that it was bound to condone.

The volume of epigrams, libels, and abusive verses during the few years of the regency is enormous. It was the beginning of an age of unsparing criticism of institutions long deemed too sacred for discussion. Those who suffered from it appealed to considerations which had once been efficacious. The regent's

daughter was among the most immoral of an immoral age. She demanded freedom from criticism as well as from restraint; the conduct of the great, she declared, was not to be discussed by the vulgar; a sacred prerogative was violated when a gazetteer could question the behavior of a princess of the blood.[1]

Scandal of magnates was regarded in every land as an offense peculiarly heinous in its nature. Though the Duke of Orleans was indifferent to many things, he was vigorous in his endeavors to check public criticism on the administration of which he was the head. Commitments to the Bastille were less frequent under the mild rule of the regent than under the inquisitorial tyranny of Louis XIV., but we still find many persons confined there upon the charge of spreading scandalous reports.[2] These efforts at repression failed. The regency was declared to be an era of vice by those who lived under it, as well as by those who came afterwards. In considering the morality or immorality of the period, we must remember that criticism was freer than it had been, and that the people who speak ill of themselves are not always worse than their neighbors.

The debauches of the Palais Royal, the scandals of St. Cloud and the Luxembourg, did not suddenly appear in a society where had existed only religious zeal and domestic purity. To be sure of this, one needs only to study the preceding reign. During the disturbances of the Fronde, immorality had flourished undisguised and unrebuked. In the career of the beautiful and charming women of that period, and of the lovers who followed them from the party of the Parliament to the party of Mazarin and back again,

[1] *Mém. de St. Simon*, xvi. 280, 281.

[2] See *Archives de la Bastille*, t. xiii.

we search in vain for either conjugal or political fidelity. The cardinal who ruled the nation made firm his hold on power by becoming the lover of the queen; the cardinal who led the opposition displayed his contempt for every law of morality.

The license of the Fronde was succeeded by the more orderly government of Louis XIV. It was long, however, before that monarch abandoned the follies of youth for the decorum of age. The example of the sovereign, in his early years, was followed by the society of which he was the centre. There were abundant reasons for this, apart from the tendency to imitate the conduct of the monarch. In a constantly increasing degree, Versailles and Paris absorbed the existence of all of eminent rank, whose wealth enabled them to share in the pleasures of the court and the metropolis. The life of the higher classes was one in which frivolity and dissipation were sure to flourish. For the most of them, an active political career was impossible; they were no longer feudal lords; they had neither capacity nor taste for the rôle of the English aristocracy; prejudices of caste kept them from joining in the occupations of ordinary mortals; trade was debasing; the study of law, or medicine, or science was beneath them. There remained only a career of pleasure, and, where amusement is the employment, dissipation is a sure attendant. The occupation of a courtier of Louis XIV. was to make himself agreeable to the king; the card table furnished him excitement, and illicit love recreation.

Later in his career the monarch abandoned pleasure for piety; those who sought his favor must be sound in theology, regular at mass, and decent in conduct. But this outward decorum was not always accompanied

by inward regeneration. The Princess Palatine declared that he who acted the *dévot* at Versailles played the atheist when he could escape to Paris.[1] In the princess, Germanic virtue was accompanied by a tongue prone to speak evil. Yet, though we may abate somewhat the charges of one whose speech was vulgar and whose taste for nastiness was insatiable, her testimony agrees with that of others as to the social condition of the later years of Louis XIV.'s reign. "Love in marriage," she wrote, in 1697, "is no longer *à la mode*." Later she said: "One still finds happy families among those of inferior condition, but among people of quality I do not know a single example of mutual affection and fidelity." [2]

Of excessive gambling and immoderate drinking, as well as of license in the relations of the sexes, there are innumerable instances in contemporary records. "I confess to you," wrote Mme. de Maintenon, in 1707, "that the women of this period are insupportable to me; their senseless and immodest dress, their tobacco, their wine, their gormandizing, their slothfulness, all this I cannot suffer." [3] The Duke of Orleans began his career of profligacy when he was a lad, a quarter of a century before the death of Louis XIV. The duke was the profligate son of a profligate sire; his dissipation was more vociferous, but it was less odious. The Duchess of Berry was as brazenly immoral while her great-uncle was alive as after he was dead. She was occasionally summoned before the sovereign to receive his rebuke, and even her audacity failed in that awful presence. But she was never sufficiently frightened to make any efforts at reformation.

[1] Letter of July 21, 1699. [2] Letter of August 16, 1721.
[3] Maintenon to Ursins, letters of June 5 and 12, 1707.

At last the great monarch died. The results of narrow bigotry and of unwholesome social conditions could develop themselves, unrestrained by the checks of decorum which he had imposed. The new head of the government was by no means the most depraved or the most vicious of rulers, but he was indifferent alike as to his own conduct and that of others.

It should be said to the credit of the Duke of Orleans that he never allowed the irregularities of his private life to interfere with the affairs of state. He was surrounded by a coterie of roués and dissolute women, who were the companions of his pleasures, but they soon found that it was impossible to gain political influence from such relations. The regent gave lavishly to his associates; many a pretty face reaped a handsome profit from the pardon of some contractor or speculator, upon whom the government had levied a great fine; but Orleans was never so intoxicated that he babbled secrets of state to his boon companions; he was never so infatuated by a beautiful woman that he allowed her to choose his ministers or dictate his policy. A favorite once ventured to transgress the rule, and sought to pry into state secrets. "Look in your glass and see if so pretty a face was made to talk politics," was the only reply. France during the regency witnessed no such shameful period as the rule of Mme. de Pompadour.

The time of the regent was divided between his duties and his pleasures with undeviating regularity. In the morning he received audiences; in the afternoon he attended the council and conferred with his ministers, or visited the king. By five or six, the work of the day was done; those who took part in the government were dismissed, and they were succeeded by the

rakes and debauchees; the doors were closed to serious affairs; after that hour it was impossible to see the regent on business, however pressing. During the eight years of his administration, every night was devoted to unbroken revelry; even when impaired health and enfeebled appetite destroyed any enjoyment in such a life, he continued it from force of habit.

The companions of his pleasures were not numerous. Perhaps a dozen men who combined wit with recklessness, irreverence, and obscenity; a few women, generally attractive, always profligate, — among whom his own daughter was often found, and some dancer or singer from the opera, — usually made up the party at the suppers of the Palais Royal. At these famous orgies there was much wit and more vulgarity. Ceremony was laid aside. The guests helped themselves, for their conduct and conversation were too bad to be witnessed by servants. The one who could tell the most scandalous story, or could devise the most profane jest, was most applauded. All decency was banished. At one supper the judgment of Paris was rehearsed. Mme. de Parabère represented Juno; Mme. d'Averne, Minerva; and the Duchess of Berry took the part of Venus. The lack of costume was entirely classical. The license grew more unbridled as the evening went on. Before it was over, most of the company were intoxicated. There was rarely a night that Orleans himself did not get stupidly drunk. The supper ended in a scene of drunken debauchery, such as might be witnessed in the lowest haunts of vice.

Many forms of amusement occupied the attention of a society that sought compensation for past restraint in present license. The opera was a favorite pastime, and the regent was often seen there. He appeared in

his *loge*, surrounded by his companions. The selection of a mistress was formally announced to the public by her appearance in the regent's box. Masked balls at the opera were an invention of the period. It is said that an Augustine friar conceived the idea of so placing a temporary flooring that the great hall could be used as a ball-room, and that he received a pension for his pains. They became popular entertainments. The freedom of speech and conduct allowed by the masks was agreeable to the public taste. All the world wanted to be amused, but the amusements pleased best which had a flavor of indecency.

The existence led by the regent sapped the vigor of body and mind. In his later years the marks of excess were only too evident. He rarely arose until late, and for an hour or more his mind was so clouded by the debauchery of the past night that he was incapable of thought, and he signed without attention any papers that were presented.[1] His language became coarse. Though by nature a courteous man, he was now ill-mannered when thwarted. He once attacked the first president of the Parliament with violent and vulgar language. "Sir," answered the president, "I had the honor of speaking often with the late king, and he would never have used such terms, even to a groom."[2]

As years went on, the license of his private life was displayed before the public, not perhaps more openly, but with more of solemn state. The choice of a new mistress was celebrated with fêtes of unseemly magnificence, and there were frequent occasions for such rejoicings. The chroniclers record the negotiations which resulted in the assumption of the place of honor

[1] St. Simon, xix. 160. [2] *Journal de Barbier*, i. 210.

by Mme. d'Averne. She demanded liberal terms, and she received them. She was given 100,000 crowns; her husband was made a captain of the guards; he had a government in Béarn and a ribbon. Gifts were sent as for a wedding; the new favorite took her place at the supper table of the Palais Royal; she appeared with the regent at the opera; she walked with him in the garden of the Tuileries, which was then the favorite resort for fashion and for gallantry. At St. Cloud the alliance was celebrated with unusual brilliancy. Twenty-four guests were bidden to the supper; this was followed by a masked ball, which was attended by every one of distinction in Paris, and lasted until daylight. Mme. d'Averne presented a belt to the regent, and verses written by Voltaire were recited, which declared the charms of the modern Venus. Without, twenty thousand lanterns illuminated the garden; the cascades played in innumerable colors, the whole park seemed on fire. At midnight there was a discharge of fireworks, which cast marvelous reflections upon the Seine and its wooded banks. For miles along the river were rows of carriages; their occupants watched the illumination, while the torches of their servants added to the beauty of the effect.[1] "Though all were eager to see the fête," says one of those who describes it, "there was no one who was not indignant. . . . It is against religion to proclaim so publicly the triumph of vice, and against humanity to give such fêtes at a time when every one is ruined and in distress." He consoled himself by saying that the attractions of the new favorite did not need such a blaze of light, for she possessed little beauty, and owed her only charms to the use of paint.

[1] Journals of Barbier and Marais, July, 1721.

Among the intermittent favorites of the regent was the Duchess of Falari. As soon as the duke her husband heard of the favor accorded to his wife, he started forthwith for Paris, but at Chartres he was arrested, and he was confined in the Bastille. Let no one suppose that he was hastening to avenge his honor, or to place any restraint upon the liberty of his wife. His only eagerness was to share in her good fortune, and to receive proper compensation. He was known to be unreasonable; the bargain with the lady had already been made and consummated; to put the husband in the Bastille seemed the simplest way to dispose of his demands.

In the strange world which surrounded the regent, ordinary jealousies and piques were forgotten. No permanent affection, no strong passion, could exist in such a circle; it was not required to be off with the old love before one was on with the new. "Sometimes," says Marais, "the regent has his mistresses consecutively, and sometimes he has them alternatively." [1]

These debauched and shameless women supped and lived together with smiling indifference, as insensible as the inhabitants of a seraglio. Their vicissitudes were only the subject of a jest. "Monseigneur, deign to look upon the former members of your harem," cried one of them from her box at the opera, as the regent promenaded with a new favorite. Mutability in affection was praised, as constancy might be in other eras. The Count of Caylus described with enthusiasm the career of Mme. de Parabère. Her heart was never vacant, he said; she deserted others and she was deserted, but the next day always furnished a new object for her affections; these were so exuberant

[1] *Journal*, December, 1720.

that during her life she counted twenty lovers, each of whom she had adored with equal intensity.[1]

The manners of such women became as bad as their morals. At a public ball at the Hotel de Ville, two duchesses and two countesses came to open strife over their seats. "You want to take a better place and show your fine clothes, but they come from the shop of your father," cries a countess to a duchess, whose pedigree was thought to have been contaminated by trade. "If our ancestry is not as good, our morals are much better than those of courtesans like you," rejoined the duchess.[2] Are these the high-bred manners of an ancient aristocracy whose destruction by a modern democracy so many deplore?

The example set by the regent was followed by almost all who had any claim to social position. The Princess of Laon became intoxicated at a supper, and indulged in liberties of an extraordinary nature. The next day she had only a jest for her adventures. The Duke of Noailles had been a favorite and a devotee under Louis XIV. Under the regent he obtained a position in the council of finance, and he changed his habits to correspond with the tastes of his new patron. He took a ballet girl for his mistress, drank too much wine at the opera balls, and laboriously practiced vices for which he had no inclination.[3]

"There is little news from Versailles," writes a contemporary, "except that the gambling is appalling, that every one is making love, that Cardinal Dubois is growing in credit, and that the quarrels of two harlots

[1] *Souvenirs de Caylus.*

[2] *Journal de Marais*, March 10, 1722; *Lettres de la Princesse Palatine*, ii. 369.

[3] St. Simon, xi. 391.

have occupied the court more than the Congress of Cambray."[1] A good jest was held worthy of promotion in the church, as well as in the state. The Abbé of Broglie praised a brand of wine, and the regent asked for some of it. The abbé sent three hundred bottles, and Orleans told him to present the bill. A long account was duly rendered for the wine, the bottles, the baskets, the freight, down to the string and the wax. The price was then stated to be the Abbey of Mont St. Michel. The regent laughed and Broglie had the abbey. "Would it not be better to give such benefices to those who do good things, instead of to those who say good things?" the chronicler concludes.[2]

Of indecent poetry there was no end, and it was as popular as it was plentiful. Among the freest of all such efforts are the verses turned off by a poetic abbé for the amusement of an amiable duchess. The lady who found entertainment in them, we are told, was wise and virtuous.[3] We may imagine what would have been relished by those who were foolish and unchaste. The dissipation at Versailles finally produced a scandal too monstrous to be overlooked. Two young duchesses, children in years but old in vice, were expelled from the court; the Duke of Boufflers was sent to Picardy; the Marquis of Rambure was thrown into the Bastille. "The debauch is without restraint," says Marais; "there is neither politeness, nor civility, nor good breeding; it is the reign of all the vices."[4]

[1] *Journal de Marais*, July, 1722. [2] *Ib.*, 1721.

[3] Marais, MS., April, 1722.

[4] Marais, July, 1722. Accounts of these scandals are found in all the contemporary writers. See Buvat, Barbier, etc. "Elle chasse de race," says Marais of the Duchess of Retz, who was one of those expelled.

It was in such a society that a character like the Duke of Richelieu could flourish. His only talent was a talent for seduction, but it was sufficient to make him famous. In politics he was a failure. He knew just enough of war to get beaten. The only position for which he was fit, as has been truly said, was the secretaryship of the department of the Parc aux Cerfs. He was a hero of the boudoir, a genius in ribbons and rendezvous; whatever he attempted, he always remained a fribble. In an unusual degree, he possessed the most contemptible quality which a man can have: he loved to boast of his successes in gallantry. Any woman to whom he made love knew that he would soon desert her, and that he would brag of his conquest to every person he met. Yet such a being was adored by all, from princesses to ballet girls. A lady of fashion seemed to lack something if her name was not claimed by the duke among his victims; the suspicion of virtue was the only thing which brought the blush of shame.

It was not strange that such a man should enjoy the favor of Louis XV.; it is more surprising that, when he was only twenty-four, he should have been deemed worthy of admission to the French Academy. He was unanimously chosen to that body, though all that he had done in literature was to write billets-doux. When he was received into Parliament, the ceremony was honored by the presence of the princes of the blood. We are told that his cloak and mantle were of cloth of gold, costing 260 livres a yard; that he seemed the ideal of Love; and that no one at the court had carried further than he good taste and magnificence in dress.[1] On his taste in clothes rested his

[1] Marais, January 6, 1721.

only just claim for fame, and the costume of Cupid would always have been appropriate for the Duke of Richelieu. Unfortunately for France, he was often allowed to masquerade under the disguise of a soldier and a statesman.

We should miss a leading figure from the society of the period if we omitted to speak of the Duchess of Berry, the favorite child of the regent. The relations between the father and daughter were extraordinary and unfortunate. They joined in common revels; the daughter saw with apparent approval her father disport himself with his favorites, and he viewed with indifference the scandalous career of his daughter.

She had been early married to a grandson of Louis XIV., as dull and as moral as were all his grandsons, and she did what was in her power to make her husband's existence unendurable. His early death, and the assumption of power by her father, left her free from restraint. The palace of the Luxembourg was assigned to her, and there she indulged in the delights of absolute license. "Barring avarice," says St. Simon, "she was a model of every vice." However indifferent to her good name, few had a greater desire for the external trappings which command respect. She horrified the observers of etiquette by appearing in the streets surrounded by guards, and preceded by men sounding tymbals, — an escort only allowed for the sovereign. At the Français she assumed royal honors, and when public discontent at these innovations compelled their abandonment, she would go to the theatre no more. She kept in her employ eight hundred servants, she squandered an income of 700,000 livres, drawn from the public treasury, and she left enormous debts at her death.

A ball which she gave was so magnificent that the court journal of the period occupied two months in describing it: at the entertainment thirty-one soups were served, and a hundred and thirty *entremets;* two hundred valets were needed to hand the plates, and one hundred and thirty-two to pour the wine. Her taste for eating and drinking shortened her life. "She cannot be well," writes her grandmother, "she is such a glutton. Every night she sits down at the table at nine, and eats till three in the morning." "She is sick," she writes again of her grand-daughter, "because she has eaten enormously and drunk too much brandy."[1] The early death of one of her companions, the Duchesse d'Albret, was attributed to the great quantities of brandy and liquors which she drank in order to keep company with her friend.[2]

While the Duchess of Berry delighted in astounding the public by her magnificence, and exacted the utmost deference for her rank, her conduct in other respects was unaffected by the opinion of the world. Among her early lovers was an equerry of her husband, and she became so infatuated that she wished to fly with him to the Hague. The charge of a fugitive princess was not a responsibility which the unfortunate equerry cared to undertake; he calmed as best he might an ardor which exceeded his desires. After her husband's death, an adventurer by the name of Rion obtained complete control over her caprices. The duchess regarded it as less unbecoming to have a man of inferior rank for a lover than for a husband. Never, she assured her family, would she sink so low as to marry Rion. At last, however, she did con-

[1] *Lettres de la Princesse Palatine,* April 12, 15, 1719.

[2] Buvat, ii. 712.

tract a secret alliance with him. He exercised over her a despotic authority, which apparently strengthened his hold upon her affection. When the duchess wished to go to the opera, he bade her stay at home; and when she wished to stay at home, he bade her go. Her dress was changed according to his caprice, until finally valets were sent during the toilet to receive the orders of the master as to what robes or ribbons should be worn. The rule by which Rion made his selection was said to be a simple one: he always chose what his wife did not wish to wear.

The character of this woman, who was the devotee of debauchery and the slave of every lust of the flesh, who gambled six nights of the week and rarely went to bed sober, would have lacked completeness if with such a life she had not combined the practices of religion. In her early years she mocked at such observances. The Duke of Berry, like his brother, complied strictly with the regulations of the church. His wife exercised her ingenuity to make this difficult for him. On fast days he found only meat on his table; she jested at his prayers, sneered at his observances, and railed when he declined to join in her drinking bouts. The duchess selected an accommodating Jesuit, who dined at her table and was a witness of her daily life. Thus, she said, she was saved the necessity of going to the confessional; the priest could see all her misdemeanors, and there was nothing left to confess.

During her liaison with Rion, though she made no change in the indecency of her conduct, she suddenly affected an extreme zeal for religious observances. She became a frequent visitor at the Carmelites; she dined with the sisters, supped at the Palais Royal, and spent the night at the opera ball. To be delivered

from an illness, she vowed that her household should for six months be clothed in white, as a symbol of purity. An agreeable spectacle was presented to the Parisian populace when the duchess was driven through the streets, the carriage and harness all of spotless white, as a mark of her gratitude and her piety.

When not yet twenty-four, the career of this daughter of the regent was brought to an early end. Her life seems like that of some Roman woman in the period of the Empire, a Faustina or a Lucilla. The same social causes bring the same results. When wealth furnishes the means of indulging every inclination, when exalted rank enables one to despise the opinion of the community, when no serious employment interests the mind, then, until human nature has attained to a higher degree of development than it has yet reached, will too often be found the perverse and capricious manifestations of unrestrained debauchery and vice.

The death of a person of distinguished rank was usually commemorated by elaborate funeral discourses. The great orators of the pulpit made their most famous efforts in celebrating the virtues of deceased kings and princesses. No funeral oration was pronounced over the Duchess of Berry. There were, indeed, bishops and abbés ready to proclaim the Christian character of the departed, but her family wisely thought that her praises had best be left unsounded.[1]

[1] The best authorities for the career of the Duchess of Berry are the letters of her grandmother, the Princess Palatine, written from Paris to her German kinsfolk, and the *Mémoires de St. Simon.* Mme. de St. Simon was lady of honor to the Duchess of Berry, and was, perhaps, the only member of the household whose character was above suspicion.

The careers of other members of the Orleans family are curious instances of the ignorance and slovenliness in which children were often reared, even those of the blood royal. One daughter married the son of Philip V., and was for a few months the queen of Spain. She was a child of only twelve when she was sent to Spain, but her ignorance was amazing even for her age.[1] This was less distressing to the family of her husband than her slovenliness. The letters of ambassadors are filled with complaints as to the conduct of the princess. Her table manners were atrocious; she was always dirty; worst of all, she had a prejudice against stockings and skirts, and she sometimes disported herself in the royal gardens, and in the presence of domestics, in a lamentable state of deshabille.[2] When Philip V. had abdicated, and his daughter-in-law was actually queen, he espied her walking in the gardens of St. Ildefonso, with no stockings and scanty skirts in a high wind. A revolution at Madrid would not have produced so terrifying an effect on the sombre etiquette of the Spanish court.[3] The death of her husband soon removed the young queen from the court where she was unwelcome.

Her sister was married to the Prince of Modena, and her trials occupied still more of diplomatic correspondence. Her unfortunate relations with her hus-

[1] One of her letters to her father may illustrate the grammar and orthography of a queen at that period: "Je netoit pas encore arriver ici le lendemein gi arriveret je fut marie le meme jour cependant ili a eu aujourduit encore des ceremonie a faire le roi et la reine me traite fort bien pour le prince vous en aves ace oui dire je suis avec un tres profond respec votre tres heumble et tres obisante file." — Letter to regent, January 21, 1722.

[2] See letters of Coulange for 1723, and of Tessé for 1724.

[3] Dispatch of Tessé, July 6, 1724.

band were the source of endless bickerings. The whole family of the regent were brought up with no pretense of education, either in books or in self-control, and the conduct of most of them did not tend to edification. His oldest son, after a brief career among the ballet girls at the opera, sought consolation in religious studies; he translated the Epistles of St. Paul, and wrote dissertations on Theodore of Mopsuestia. He was not far removed from an imbecile, but otherwise there was little to say against him. One daughter took the veil, was made an abbess, and became known as a defender of Jansenism. She had been enough in the world to have contracted some of its customs, and she found it difficult to overcome them. It was long before she was able to discard her habit of swearing. The usages of good society did not accord with modern notions. A lady of position in the time of the regency was often bedaubed with snuff, and was apt to use a round oath.

There was talk of marrying one of the sisters to the Count of Charolais, but he was unwilling. It was little loss, for this younger brother of the Duke of Bourbon had so violent and so vicious a character that he might well be regarded as insane. The Condés and the Orleans were equally addicted to dissipation, but this community of taste did not make them friendly. "All the members of the royal family hate each other like the devil," wrote Orleans's mother. In another letter she gives the true explanation: "If you want to know the true reason why the princes and princesses detest each other so much, it is because they are all utterly worthless."[1]

[1] *Lettres de la Princesse Palatine*, November 30, 1715, and January, 1720.

The wife of the regent furnished another type, which was not uncommon, and which was no more deserving of praise than that represented by his daughter, the Duchess of Berry. Her life was free from gross immorality, but she watched the vices of her husband and her children with tranquil imperturbability. She spent entire days stretched upon her sofa, surrounded by her parrots, talking scandal, arranging her paint, tying bows, and playing lansquenet. The duke's mother was a more vigorous character, but she also was addicted to the sluggishness of body which was deemed fitting in a great lady. The public avenged itself both on her and her son by the epitaph which went the rounds of Paris : " Here lies Indolence, the mother of all Vice."

Though the criticisms of contemporaries upon the manners of the period were freer than in the past, yet it often seemed as if moral judgment and the perception of right and wrong had no existence. Whatever were Cardinal Dubois's abilities as a statesman, no one can claim that his standard or his practices deserved the special approbation of religion. When the assembly of the Gallican Church met in 1723, a motion that the cardinal should be chosen to preside over their deliberations was adopted with enthusiasm. Two archbishops, four bishops, and six abbés went to receive the holy man when he descended from his carriage. The orator of the assembly dwelt eloquently upon the gratitude of the bishops and clergy to the cardinal for the good work he had done in the cause of religion.

In all the assembly there was not one who did not know that Dubois had viewed with indifference the excesses of the regency, — who did not know that he

was greedy, that he was licentious, that he disregarded every observance of the church. But he was a cardinal, and he had assisted in the persecution of those who differed from their brethren on the nature of grace and the authority of the Pope. Such were the services to religion which, in the most solemn manner, were praised by the general assembly of the clergy of France.

The Christian character of the regent excited the same approbation as that of his minister. Said the Archbishop of Aix, in presenting the address of the assembly to the Duke of Orleans: "We pray that the Almighty may send his benediction upon a prince who commands our love by his goodness, and our admiration by the virtues with which he is filled." The life of the Duke of Orleans was a public scandal; he devoted every night to debauchery, he had as many mistresses as Solomon had wives, he found pleasure in drunken obscenity and profanity, and of all this there was not the slightest concealment. It was as familiar to the humblest curate as it was to the Archbishop of Aix. And yet the duke was declared to be a character so filled with virtue that he commanded alike the love and the admiration of the representatives of religion.

We ask in vain what was the standard of morality by which the conduct of men high in rank and position was judged. Upon the rake, the debauchee, the infidel, who was willing to conform to the outward observances of religion, were poured the praises which would have been fitting for men of high aims, pure life, and sincere faith. Was it possible that a society should continue to exist whose judgments were so far removed from the ordinary standards of mankind?

Was it not necessary that it should be reformed from within, or reformed from without? There are many who look back with regret upon a society which has passed away forever. Are they familiar with all its characteristics, with its moral deficiencies, with the selfishness and the coarseness that were bred by the social conditions which then existed? Would they wish to see this society restored for themselves and their children, with the vices as well as the graces which it contained?

The morality of the upper classes was not that of all classes. No government could continue to exist where the entire community was destitute of religion and of virtue. The poverty of nine tenths of the population in France furnished little opportunity for dissipation. Among the bourgeoisie and the parliamentary families, the traditions of sober and discreet domestic life still prevailed. But the example set by the highest classes is never without its influence; it furnishes a standard for those who acquire wealth, and for those who wish to imitate their social superiors.

It was a relaxation of religious belief, rather than an alteration in modes of life, which began to manifest itself in the community at large. The indications of such a change were visible before the close of the reign of Louis XIV. It could develop without restraint under the regency, it was to increase in force under Louis XV. and Louis XVI. The church had occupied the close of the seventeenth century with the persecution of the Huguenots, with the expulsion of intelligent and God-fearing citizens, with a fruitless endeavor to crush differences of opinion. In the eighteenth century its energies were employed by acrimo-

nious wrangling over Jansenism and the doctrines of the bull Unigenitus. Its influence steadily waned, until those who had been intolerant to others found themselves the victims of intolerance. Both church and state were to destroy the deep-seated feelings of reverence, which had long been their sure support, by bigotry combined with vice, by narrow thinking and low living.[1]

Amidst surroundings such as we have described, the young Louis XV. was growing to be a king; the character was forming of the man who for half a century was to be the ruler of France. The reign of Louis XV. in length nearly equaled that of Louis XIV. It contained little to excite the pride of patriotism, but it was perhaps the more important of the two in its effect on the government, the beliefs, and the destinies of the country.

The life of the court was not one which would fill a young prince with noble ideals. Orleans was not without a sense of his responsibilities to his ward; spasmodic efforts were made to remove objects of scandal from the immediate presence of the king. They were attended with little success. Louis's would have been a rare nature if, in the atmosphere of the Louvre or Versailles, he could have developed the qualities of a virtuous man and a wise ruler.

The Marshal of Villeroy was the young king's governor. He was a man free from the licentiousness of

[1] This is especially true of the reign of Louis XV. When his successor ascended the throne the harm was done. The improvement in the character of the clergy, which can be noticed shortly before the Revolution, had as little effect on the progress of events as the superiority of Louis XVI.'s private character over that of his grandfather.

the time, but he was none the better fitted to instruct a sovereign in his duties. A nobleman of inferior intellect and excessive pride, holding firmly the tenets of the divine and unquestionable authority of kings, he had gained no humility from defeat, and no wisdom from a long life; he embodied the palsied imbecility of a class which could not adapt itself to a new régime. With Villeroy for a teacher of statecraft, and Orleans as an example of morality, Louis XV. began his career under evil auspices.

It was difficult as yet to form any opinion of the character of the future ruler. He possessed the timidity and the intellectual sluggishness which were found in so many of the Bourbon princes. He spoke little and was extremely diffident. Some of the reports of his conduct as a child indicated an indifference hardening into cruelty, which was not encouraging for the future. He seemed to take a sullen pleasure in watching the slaughter of little birds. He had a favorite dog, which ate from his hand. He resolved to shoot the beast for amusement. It was placed at a distance and he fired and wounded it; the poor animal crawled up to his master and licked his hand, but again he had it removed; he fired a second time and killed it.[1] Such an incident shows a cold heart, and a heart indifferent to the weal and woe of all the world Louis XV. was to manifest in his maturity. His early surroundings make his subsequent character no more admirable, but they may help to explain it.

The close of the regent's career was in harmony with his life. He had long been warned that, unless he changed his habits, death might be in store for him

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, April, 1722. See, also, Dangeau, April 18, 1716.

at any time. To the remonstrances of his friends he replied that when the end came he preferred that it should come quickly. After finishing his work on the 2d of December, 1723, he retired to his cabinet, where the Duchess of Falari was waiting to amuse him. The regent began talking in the jesting manner that was habitual with him. "Do you really believe that there is a God," he said to his mistress, "and that there is a heaven and hell after this life?" "Certainly, my prince, I believe it," she answered. "If that is true," he rejoined, with more truth than politeness, "you are most unfortunate to lead the life you do." "I hope that God will be merciful at the end," replied the duchess. It was the last conversation of the Duke of Orleans. He threw himself in a chair, saying that he felt unwell, and in a few moments he was dead.[1] He died, as was fitting, in the arms of his mistress, with a jest at religion on his lips.

"Here we can properly close the journal of the regency of this incomparable prince," writes a contemporary who day by day had recorded its events. The journal contains full particulars of all the vices of the regent; the license of his life is exaggerated rather than concealed. But the prince was a prince all the same; he still seemed an incomparable ruler to the humble chronicler who had written the history of his administration.

[1] *Journal de la Régence*, December 3, 1723. I think this account of Orleans's death is substantially correct. A somewhat different account is given in a letter of Crawford to Carteret, December 6, 1723.

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